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The German Knight.

Vol 2 To face Title

Designed & Drawn on Stone by T. Dighton.

Printed by C. Hullmandel.

NATIONAL TALES.

BY

THOMAS HOOD,

AUTHOR OF "WHIMS AND ODDITIES."

I am to speak of universal occurrences, with some misfortunes in part, and partly leaning to matters of love. *Philostratus.*

IN TWO VOLUMES

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CONTENTS.

THE EXILE 1

THE OWL 19

THE GERMAN KNIGHT 29

THE FLORENTINE KINSMEN . . 43

THE CARRIER'S WIFE 57

THE TWO FAITHFUL LOVERS OF SICILY . 71

THE VENETIAN COUNTESS . . . 95

A TALE OF THE HAREM . . . 127

THE CHESTNUT TREE 163

THE FAIR MAID OF LUDGATE . . 187

THE THREE BROTHERS 211

THE EXILE,

"I'faith there 's a warp in his brain!
A straight thought grows as crooked in his reflection,
As the shadow of a stick in a pond."

LOVE'S MADNESS.

The Exile.

Vol. 2.

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THE EXILE.

In the reign of King Charles the Fifth of Spain, there lived in Madrid a gentleman, who being of a fair reputation and an ample fortune, obtained in marriage the daughter of one of the counsellors of state. He had not lived long thus happily, when one day his father-in-law returned from the council, with a countenance full of dismay, and informed him that a secret accusation of treason had been preferred against him.

"Now, I know," said he, "that you are incapable of so great a wickedness, not merely

from the loyalty of your nature, but because you cannot be so cruel as to have joined in a plot which was directed against my own life as well as others: yet, not knowing how far the malice of your enemies might prevail, for your marriage has made foes of many who were before your rivals, I would advise you to a temporary flight. Time, which discovers all mysteries, will then, in some happier season, unravel the plot which is laid against your life: but at present, the prejudice against you is hot—and the danger therefore is imminent."

To this the gentleman replied, that as he should answer to God in judgment, he was innocent, and altogether ignorant of the treason imputed to him; and therefore, being conscious of his innocence, and besides, so recently married, he preferred rather to remain in the kingdom and await the issue of his trial. The danger, however, became more pressing with every hour, and, finally, the advice of the counsellor prevailed. The unfortunate gentle-

man, accordingly, took a hasty but most affectionate farewell of his young wife; and with a heavy heart embarked on board a foreign merchant vessel that was bound for the Gulf of Venice. The counsellor was immediately arrested and thrown into prison, as having been an accessary to his son-in-law's escape; but being afterwards set free, he was still watched so vigilantly by the spies of the accusers, that he could not safely engage in any correspondence with his relation.

In this manner nearly two years passed away; till at length the miserable exile grew so impatient of his condition, that he resolved to return, even at whatever hazard to his life. Passing therefore by way of France into Spain, and taking care to disguise himself so effectually that he could not be recognized by his oldest acquaintance, he arrived in safety at a village in the neighbourhood of Madrid. There he learned, for the first time, that his father-in-law had been disgraced and amerced so heavily,

that being of a proud spirit and unable to endure his reverses, he had died of a broken heart: and moreover, that his daughter was presently living in the capital in the greatest affliction. At these melancholy tidings, he repented more than ever that he had quitted Spain, and resolved to repair to his wife without any further delay.

Now it chanced in the village where he was resting, that he had a very dear friend, named Rodrigo, who had been his school-mate, and was as dear to him as a brother; and going to his house at sunset, he discovered himself to the other, and besought him to go before to Madrid, and prepare his dear wife for his arrival. "And now, remember," said he, "that my life, and not only mine, but my dear lady's also, depends upon your breath; and if you frame it into any speech, so imprudently as to betray me, I vow by our Holy Lady of Loretto, that I will eat your heart;" and with this and still stranger expressions, he conducted

himself so wildly, as to show that his misfortunes, and perhaps some sickness, had impaired the healthiness of his brain. His friend, however, like a prudent man, concealed this observation; but unlocking his library, and saying that there was store of entertainment in his absence, he departed on his mission.

On Rodrigo's arrival at the lady's house, she was seated on a sofa, and, as if to divert her cares, was busied in some embroidery; but every now and then she stayed her needle to wipe off a tear that gathered on her long dark eye-lashes, and sometimes to gaze for minutes together on a small portrait which lay before her on a table. "Alas!" she said to the picture, "we two that should have lived together so happily, to be thus asunder; but absence has made room for sorrow to come between us, and it slays both our hearts:" and as she complained thus, Rodrigo joyfully entered and began to unfold to her his welcome tidings.

At first, the sorrowful lady paid scarcely any

attention to his words, but so soon as she comprehended that it concerned her dear husband's arrival, she could hardly breathe for joy.

"What! shall I behold him here, in this very spot; nay here," said she, pressing her hands vehemently upon her bosom: "I pray thee do not mock me, for my life is so flown into this hope, that they must die together if you deceive me;" and only at the entrance of that doubt she burst into a flood of tears. But being assured that the news was indeed true, and that her husband would presently be with her, she clasped her hands passionately together, and crying out that joy was as hard to bear as grief, besought Heaven that it might not madden her before he came, and then began to weep again as violently as before. Upon this, Rodrigo reproving her, she excused herself, saying "that a dream which had troubled her in the night, had overpowered her weak spirits."

"And in truth," said she, "it was very horrible; for my dear husband appeared to me like a

phantom, and laid his cold hand upon mine, like a fall of snow; and he asked me if I was afraid of him, that I shuddered so, and I answered him 'God forbid! but yet your voice methinks is not your own, nor so gentle,—but very fierce, and there is a strange light instead of love, in your eyes.' And he said, 'This voice truly is not my own, nor the shining of my eyes; but the serpent's within me, who hath devoured my brain; and when he looks out upon thee, he will kill thee, for he does not love thee as I used, neither is there any remorse in his heart.' As he spoke thus, I saw a light shining in his skull, and wild strange eyes looking forth through his eyes; so that I cried out with terror, and awaked. But ever since this dream has haunted me, and even now, as you see, I cannot quite get rid of its depression."

At the nature of this dream Don Rodrigo could scarcely forbear from shuddering, for he doubted not that the serpent signified the madness which he had observed about his friend,

and that the vision itself was but the type of some impending calamity ; nevertheless, he subdued his own fears before the lady, and endeavoured to divert her thoughts till the arrival of her husband.

After a tedious interval, at length the door was suddenly flung open, and he leaped in ; and rushing to his wife they embraced in silence for several sweet minutes, till separating a little, that they might gaze on each other, the lady remarked that his arm was bound up in a bloody handkerchief.

"Nay," said he, perceiving her alarm ; "it is no very grievous hurt, though I have been assailed by robbers in my way hither : but, alas ! what greater injury hath grief wrought upon thee !" for with her maidenly figure, she had all the careful countenance of a matron in years.

Indeed, it was easy to conceive how their hearts had suffered and hungered for each other by their present passionate endearments, for they soon crowded into a few short minutes all

the hoarded affection of years. But such joy as theirs is often but the brief wonder of unhappy lives; and so, in the very summit of delight, they were interrupted by Don Rodrigo, who, with looks full of terror, declared that the house was beset by the police, and presently a loud knocking was heard at the outer gates. At this alarm, the two unfortunates started asunder, and listened till they heard even the throbbings of their own fearful hearts. But at the second knocking, the gentleman, quitting his wife, and drawing his sword, stared wildly about him with eyes that seemed to flash out sparkles of unnatural fire.

"Ha!" said he, casting a terrible glance upon Rodrigo; "have I sold my life to such a devil?" and suddenly springing upon him and tearing him down to the ground, he thrust his sword fiercely into his bosom.

And indeed it seemed but too reasonable that Rodrigo, who alone had known the secret of the Exile's arrival, had betrayed him to the

government. Notwithstanding, at the first flush of the blood, as it gushed out as if in reproach of the weapon, the gentleman made an effort to raise his friend again from the floor; but in the meantime the police had enforced their entrance, and now made him their prisoner without any resistance. He begged merely that his arms might be left unbound, but immediately attempting in his frenzy to do some injury to his wife, and reviling her, through madness, with the very venom and aspect of a serpent, the officers hurried him instantly to his prison. All the time that he was being fettered he seemed quite unconscious, and altogether in some dream foreign to his condition; but as the door closed and the bolts grated harshly on the outside, he recovered his senses, and made answer with a deep groan.

At first he believed he had no company in his misery, but presently he heard a rustling of straw, with a clanking of chains in one corner of the dungeon, which was a very dark one,

and a man in irons came up slowly towards the grate. The little light sufficed to show that his countenance was a very horrid one, although hidden for the most part in his black, bushy hair; and he had besides but one eye: by which tokens the gentleman readily recognized him, as one of the banditti who had set upon him in the forest.

"So, senor," said he, "I perceive that one foul night has netted us both; and therein I have done to thee one more injury than I designed; but my plunder has all gone before the council, and along with it, thy papers: so if there be aught treasonable in them that brings thee to this cage, my ill luck must be blamed for it, which is likely to bring us both to the same gallows."

At this discourse the gentleman fell into a fresh frenzy, but less of madness than of bitter grief and remorse: every word avenging upon him the stab which he had inflicted on his dear friend Rodrigo. He cast himself, therefore, on

the hard floor, and would have dashed his tortured brains against the stones, but for the struggles of the robber, who, hardhearted and savage as he had been by profession, was yet touched with strange pity at the sight of so passionate a grief. It settled upon him afterwards to a deep dejection, and in this condition, after some weeks' confinement, the wretched gentleman was finally released without any trial, by an order of the council. This change, however, which should have been a blessing to any other, produced no alleviation of his malady. It was nothing in the world to him that he was free to revisit its sunshine, and partake of all its natural delights—and above all, enjoy the consolations and the sweets of domestic affection. Though there was one ever gazing upon him with an almost breaking heart, he neither felt his own misery nor hers, but looked upon all things with an eye bright and fiery indeed at times; but not, like the stars, illuminate with knowledge.

In this mood he would sit for hours with his arms folded, and gazing upon the vacant air, sighing sometimes—but never conscious of the presence of his once beloved wife, who sat before him, and watched his stedfast countenance, till she wept at his want of sympathy. Day passed after day, and night after night, but there was no change in the darkness of his mind, till one morning, as he sat, his reason as it were returned upon him like the dawn of day, when the sky is first streaked with light, and the world gains a weak intelligence of the things that are in it. He had been looking for some minutes on his wife without knowing her, but tears glistened, for the first time, in his eyes, and at last two large drops, and with those his delirium, were shed from his eyelids. He immediately recognized his wife, and cast himself into her arms.

The joyful lady, in her turn, found it hard to retain her senses. After returning his caresses in the tenderest manner, she hastened

immediately to Don Rodrigo, who, though severely hurt, had got better of his wound, and watched the more dreadful malady of his friend, sometimes indeed, in hope, but more commonly in despair of his recovery. At the first news, therefore, he ran hastily to the room, and soon cast himself into the arms of his friend: but the latter received him coldly; and before Rodrigo could finish even a brief salutation, he felt the other's arms loosening from around his neck, and beheld his head suddenly drop, as if it had been displeasing that their eyes should meet again. It seemed, indeed, that his malady had already returned upon him; but in another moment the body fell forwards on the floor, and instantly the blood gushed from a hidden wound in the side, which had hitherto been concealed by the mantle. A pair of scissors, covered with blood and broken, for the wound had been desperately bestowed, dropped from him as he fell: for, to show more sadly the

lady's own joyful forgetfulness, she had supplied the weapon for this dreadful catastrophe.

As for the miserable lady, it was feared, from the violence of her grief, that the same dismal blow would have been her death; but her heart had been too long inured to such sufferings to be so speedily broken; and at last, attaining to that peace which belongs only to the comforts of our holy religion, she devoted her widowhood to God, and cheerfully ended an old age of piety in the Convent of St. Faith.

THE OWL.

"What great eyes you have got!"

RED RIDING HOOD.

THE OWL.

"An indiscreet friend," says the proverb, "is more dangerous than the naked sword of an enemy;" and truly, there is nothing more fatal than the act of a misjudging ally, which, like a mistake in medicine, is apt to kill the unhappy patient whom it was intended to cure.

This lesson was taught in a remarkable manner to the innocent Zerlina, a peasant; to conceive which, you must suppose her to have gone by permission into the garden of the Countess of Marezzo, near the Arno, one beautiful morning of June. It was a spacious pleasure-ground, excellently disposed and

adorned with the choicest specimens of shrubs and trees, being bounded on all sides by hedge-rows of laurels and myrtles, and such sombre ever-greens, and in the midst was a pretty verdant lawn with a sun-dial.

The numberless plants that belong to that bountiful season were then in full flower, and the delicate fragrance of the orange blossoms perfumed the universal air. The thrushes were singing merrily in the copses, and the bees, that cannot stir without music, made a joyous humming with their wings. All things were vigorous and cheerful except one, a poor owl, that had been hurt by a bolt from a cross-bow, and so had been unable by daylight to regain his accustomed hermitage, but sheltered himself under a row of laurel-trees and hollies, that afforded a delicious shadow in the noon-tide sun. There, shunning and shunned by all, as is the lot of the unfortunate, he languished over his wound; till a flight of pert sparrows espying him, he was soon forced to endure

a thousand twittings as well as buffets from that insolent race.

The noise of these chatterers attracting the attention of Zerlina, she crossed over to the spot; and, lo! there crouched the poor bewildered owl, blinking with his large bedazzled eyes, and nodding as if with giddiness from his buffetings and the blaze of unusual light.

The tender girl being very gentle and compassionate by nature, was no ways repelled by his ugliness; but thinking of his sufferings, took up the feathered wretch in her arms and endeavoured to revive him by placing him on her bosom. There, nursing him with an abundance of pity and concern, she carried him to the grass-plat, and being ignorant of his habits, laid out the poor drooping bird, as her own lively spirits prompted her, in the glowing sun-shine; for she felt in her own heart, at that moment, the kind and cheerful influence of the genial sun. Then, withdrawing a little way and leaning against the dial, she awaited the grateful

change which she hoped to behold in the creature's looks; whereas, the tormented owl being grievously dazzled, and annoyed more than ever, hopped off again, with many piteous efforts, to the shady evergreens. Notwithstanding, believing that this shyness was only because of his natural wildness or fear, she brought him over again to the lawn, and then ran into the house for some crumbs to feed him withal.

The poor owl, in the meantime, crawled partly back, as before, to his friendly shelter of holly. The simple girl found him, therefore, with much wonder, again retiring towards those gloomy bushes.

"Why, what a wilful creature is this," she thought; "that is so loth to be comforted. No sooner have I placed it in the warm cheerful sunshine, which enlivens all its fellow-birds to chirp and sing, than it goes back and mopes under the most dismal corners. I have known many human persons to have those peevish fits, and to reject kindness as perversely, but who

would look for such unnatural humours in a simple bird."

Therewith, taking the monkish fowl from his dull leafy cloisters, she disposed him once more on the sunny lawn, where he made still fresh attempts to get away from the over painful radiance—but was now become too feeble and ill to remove. Zerlina therefore began to believe that he was reconciled to his situation; but she had hardly cherished this fancy, when a dismal film came suddenly over his large round eyes; and then falling over upon his back, after one or two slow gasps of his beak, and a few twitches of his aged claws, the poor martyr of kindness expired before her sight. It cost her a few tears to witness the tragical issue of her endeavours; but she was still more grieved afterwards, when she was told of the cruelty of her unskilful treatment:—and the poor owl, with its melancholy death, was the frequent subject of her meditations.

In the year after this occurrence, it happened

that the Countess of Marezzo was in want of a young female attendant, and being much struck with the modesty and lively temper of Zerlina she requested of her parents to let her live with her. The poor people having a numerous family to provide for, agreed very cheerfully to the proposal; and Zerlina was carried by her benefactress to Rome. Her good conduct confirming the prepossessions of the Countess, the latter showed her many marks of her favour and regard, not only furnishing her handsomely with apparel, but taking her as a companion, on her visits to the most rich and noble families, so that Zerlina was thus introduced to much gaiety and splendour. Her heart, notwithstanding, ached oftentimes under her silken dresses, for in spite of the favour of the Countess, she met with many slights from the proud and wealthy, on account of her humble origin, as well as much envy and malice from persons of her own condition. She fell therefore into a deep melancholy, and being interro-

gated by the Countess, she declared that she pined for her former humble but happy estate: and begged with all humility that she might return to her native village.

The Countess being much surprised as well as grieved at this confession, enquired if she had ever given her cause to repent of her protection, to which Zerlina replied with many grateful tears, but still avowing the ardour of her wishes.

"Let me return," said she, "to my own homely life; this oppressive splendour dazzles and bewilders me. I feel by a thousand humiliating misgivings and disgraces, that it is foreign to my nature; my defects of birth and manners making me shrink continually within myself, whilst those who were born for its blaze, perceive readily that I belong to an obscurer race, and taunt me with jests and indignities for intruding on their sphere. Those also, who should be my equals, are quite as bitter against me for overstepping their station, so that my life is thus a

round of perpetual mortifications and uneasiness. Pray, therefore, absolve me of ingratitude, if I long to return to my native and proper shades—with their appointed habits. I am dying, like the poor owl, for lack of my natural obscurity."

The curiosity of the Countess being awakened by her last expression, Zerlina related to her the story of that unfortunate bird, and applied it with a very touching commentary to her own condition; so that the Countess was affected even to the shedding of tears: she immediately comprehended the moral, and carrying back Zerlina to her native village, she bestowed her future favour so judiciously, that instead of being a misfortune, it secured the complete happiness of the pretty peasant.

THE GERMAN KNIGHT.

Of breaking spears, of ringing helm and shield,
A dreadful rumour roar'd on every side:
There lay a horse; another through the field
Ran masterless,—dismounted was his guide.

GODFREY OF BULLOIGNE.

THE GERMAN KNIGHT.

THERE is an old proverb, that some jokes are cut-throats; meaning that certain unlucky jests are apt to bring a tragical ending,—a truth which has been confirmed by many instances, besides that one which I am about to relate.

At the memorable siege of Vienna by the French, in the year ——, the inhabitants enrolled themselves in great numbers for the defence of the city, and amongst these was one Lodowic, a man of dull intellect and a hasty temper, but withal of a slow courage. He was not one of the last, however, to volunteer; for there was a lady in the back-ground who ex-

cited him, with an extraordinary eagerness, to take up arms against the common enemy.

It is notorious that the Germans, though phlegmatic, are a romantic people in their notions; the tales of chivalry, the mysteries of Odin, and diabolical legends, being their most favourite studies. In affairs of business they are plodding, indefatigable, and of an extraordinary patience, their naturalists having counted cod's eggs, by millions, beyond any other people; and in their extravagant flights they equally surpass the rest of mankind, even as it has been observed of the most sedate drudge-horses, that they kick up highest of any when turned out free into the meadow.

Dorothea, for so the lady was called, partook largely of the national bias; and in truth, for her own peace and contentment, should have lived some centuries sooner, when the customs recorded by the minnesingers and troubadours were the common usages. In her own times, it was a novelty to see a young maiden so over-

delighted as she was at the dedication of her lover to deeds of arms and bloodshed; as if, forsooth, he had been going only to tilt with a blunted lance at a holiday tournament, instead of the deadly broil with the French in which he was engaged. With her own hand she embroidered for him a silken scarf, in the manner of the damsels of yore, and bereaved her own headgear to bedeck his helmet with a knightly plume. For it was one of her fancies, that Lodowic should go forth to the war in the costume of her ancestors, from whose armoury she selected a suit of complete steel, which had been worn aforetime in the Holy Land.

The timid spirit of the German made him willingly entrench himself in a coat of mail, and its security helped him to overlook the undue alacrity with which the lady of his love commended him to the bloody field. Not a tear did she spend at the buckling on of his cuirass, nor a single sigh at the delivery of his shield.

" Return with this," said the hard-hearted one, " or upon it,"—a benediction which she had learned of the Spartan heroine.

It was noon, when the redoubtable Lodowic rode forth thus accoutred to join his troop on the parade. His horse, scared by the clattering of the armour, made many desperate plunges by the way, to the manifest derangement of his scarf, and still more of his plumes, which began to droop down his nape in a very unseemly fashion. The joints of his armour being stiff with the rust of age, he had no great command of his limbs, nor was he very expert or graceful in the management of his lance. As for his shield, he had found convenient to cast it amongst certain gossiping housewives in the street; so that, in extremity, he could fulfil neither of the Spartan conditions.

The common people, who have hawks' eyes for any grotesque figure, shouted lustily after him as he rode, which attracted the general notice of his troop to that quarter, and as soon

as they perceived his uncouth habiliments, set off as they were by his imperturbable German gravity, there was a tumult of laughter and derision along the whole line.

Now it happened that there belonged to this troop an adjutant, a special friend of Lodowic, but, on this occasion, the most bitter of his mockers. A hundred merry jests he passed upon the unlucky man-at-arms, till at last the incensed Paladin beckoned him a pace or two apart, and after a short but angry conference, returned with his face at a white heat to his mistress, and informed her of the event.

"Now this adventure," said the cruel one, "falls out better than I hoped. Thou shalt cast down thy gauntlet in defiance of this uncourteous knight; and though there be no royal lists appointed in these days, ye may have, notwithstanding, a very honourable and chivalrous encounter."

"As for that, Madam," returned Lodowic, "the matter is settled, and without throwing

about any gloves at all. I have dared him to meet me to-morrow at sunrise, by the Linden Wood; and one way or another I dare say something desperate will be done between us."

The hard-hearted one, highly in love with this news, embraced Lodowic very tenderly, and, to mark her grace towards him still farther, gave him her glove to wear as a favour during the impending combat. She selected for him, moreover, a new suit of armour, and gave him a fresh shield against any disaster,—a provision which the knight acknowledged with equal gratitude and gravity. And now she had nothing left but to dream, waking or sleeping, of the wager of battle of the morrow; whereas, Lodowic closed his eyes no more through the night, than if he had been watching his arms in a church.

As soon as the cocks began to crow, which he heard with as much pleasure as St. Peter, he put on his arms, and set forth whilst the morning was yet at a grey light. There is no chill

so deathlike and subtle, as that which springs up with the vapourish damps before sunrise, and Lodowic soon found himself all over in a cold sweat, answerable to that of the earth. Thoughts of death, beside, began now to be busy within him; the very crimson rents and fissures of the eastern sky suggesting to him the gaping of the gory wounds which might soon be inflicted on his miserable body—for he knew that even the iron defences of the olden knights had not exempted them from such cruel slashes. In the mean time, he studied a pacific discourse, which he trusted would heal up the quarrel better than either sword or lance; and in this Christian temper he arrived at the appointed place. There was no one yet visible within the narrow obscure horizon; wherefore he paced his horse slowly up and down in front of the Linden Wood, between which and himself there flowed a small murmuring stream.

After about twenty turns to and fro, Lodowic

beheld some one emerging from the trees, whom the mist of the morning would not let him perfectly distinguish. However, the pale light of the sun began presently to glance upon the figure, turning it from a dark object to a bright one, so that it gleamed out like the rivulet, which stood at nearly the same distance. The figure leaped his horse over the brook with a slight noise that sounded like the jingling of arms, and coming gently into the foreground, Lodowic discerned that it was the Adjutant, in a suit of complete armour. At this sight, he was very much puzzled whether to take it as a new affront or as an apology, that the other came thus, in a suit of the kind that had begotten their difference; but how monstrous was his rage, to discover that it was only a burlesque armour—the helmet being merely a pewter bason, and the shield the cover of a large iron pot. The mocker, pursuing his original jest in this indiscreet way, had prepared a set speech for the encounter.

" You see, Cousin," said he, " that I meet you at your own arms. Here is my helmet to match with yours, and this my buckler is made after the model of your own; here is my corslet too"—but before he could achieve the comparison, his horse was staggering from the rush of the choleric Lodowic, whose spear, whether by accident or design, was buried deep in the other's bosom. The wounded man gave but one groan, and fell backward, and the horse of Lodowic taking fright at the clatter of the armour, started off at full gallop, throwing his rider side by side with the bleeding wretch upon the grass.

As soon as he recovered from the shock, Lodowick got up and gazed with fixed eyes on the wounded man. He was lying on his back, staring dreadfully against the sky; one of his hands was clenched about the handle of the cruel spear—the other he kept striking with mere anguish against the ground, where it soon became dabbled in a pool of blood that had

flowed from his wound. Anon, drawing it in a fresh agony across his brow, his face likewise was smeared over with the gore, making altogether so shocking a picture that Lodowic was ready to swoon away upon the spot.

" In the name of God," he cried, " tell me, my dearest friend, that you are not mortally hurt"—but the wounded man made answer only by a horrible roll of his eyes, and so expired.

Imagine what a dreadful sharp pang of remorse went through the bosom of Lodowic at this dreary spectacle. His heart felt cold within him, like a ball of snow, but his head was burning with a tumult of remorseful and miserable thoughts, together with some most painful misgivings, as to the disposition of his mistress, which now began to show at variance with loveliness and womanhood. But it was time to begone, the country people beginning to stir about the fields; so casting off the accursed armour, which now pained him through and

through, like Nessus's poisoned shirt, he ran off, bewildered, he knew not whither.

Shortly after his departure, the hard-hearted Dorothea, with her woman, arrived at the spot —and lo! there lay the dead body of the Adjutant, with the spear still sticking upright in his bosom. I know not how such a fortitude consists with the female nature, but she looked on this dreadful object with all the serenity of a lady in old romance. Her only concern was to behold the armour of Lodowic scattered so shamefully about, for she had resolved that he should repair to her with all the chivalrous formality. Returning home, therefore, with great scorn and anger in her looks, she promised to visit the unfortunate knight with a rigorous penance; but she saw no more of Lodowic, except the following letter, which was brought to her the same evening by a peasant.

MADAM:—I send you by this page your glove, stained with the blood of the traitor, for-

merly my friend. It grieves me that I cannot lay it with my own hands at your feet, but a vow binds me to achieve deeds more worthy of your beauty, and my devotion. To-morrow I set forth for Cyprus, and I shall not think myself entitled to your presence till I have strung the heads of a score of Turks at my saddle-bow. Till then, I remain in all loyalty, your true knight, LODOWIC.

The hard-hearted one perused this letter with an equal mixture of delight and doubt, for the style of the German, hitherto, had been neither quaint nor heroical. She waited many long years, you may believe, for the heads of the Infidels. In the mean time, Lodowic had passed over into England, where he married the widow of a refiner, and soon became an opulent sugar-baker; for though he still had some German romantic flights, on an occasion, he was as steady and plodding as a blind mill-horse in his business.

THE FLORENTINE KINSMEN.

THE

FLORENTINE KINSMEN.

It is a true proverb, that we are hawks in discerning the faults of others, but buzzards in spying out our own: and so is the other, that no man will act wickedly before a mirror; both of which sayings, I hope to illustrate in the following story.

The hereditary domains of the Malatesti, formerly a very ancient and noble family of Florence, were large and princely, though now they are alienated and parcelled out amongst numerous possessors; and the race which then

owned them is extinct. After many generations, the greater portion of the estates descended to a distant relation of the house, and the remainder to his kinsman, who had already some very large possessions of his own.

This man, notwithstanding he was so rich, and able to live, if he chose, in the greatest luxury and profusion, was still so covetous as to cast an envious and grudging eye on the property of his noble kinsman, and he did nothing but devise secretly how he should get the rest of the estates of the Malatesti into his own hands. His kinsman, however, though generous and hospitable, was no prodigal or gambler, likely to stand in need of usurious loans; neither a dissolute liver, that might die prematurely, nor a soldier; but addicted to peaceful literary studies, and very temperate in his habits.

The miserly man, therefore, saw no hope of obtaining his wishes, except at the price of blood—and he did not scruple at last to admit

this horrible alternative into his nightly meditations. He resolved, therefore, to bribe the notorious Pazzo, a famous robber of that time, to his purpose: but ashamed, perhaps, to avow his inordinate longings, even to a robber, or else grudging the high wages of such a servant of iniquity, he afterwards revoked this design, and took upon his own hands the office of an assassin.

Accordingly he invited his unsuspecting kinsman, with much specious kindness, to his own house, under a pretence of consulting him on some rare old manuscripts, which he had lately purchased, a temptation which the other was not likely to resist. He repaired, therefore, very readily to the miser's country seat, where they spent a few days together very amicably though not sumptuously: but the learned gentleman was contented with the entertainment, which he hoped to meet with in the antique papyri. At last, growing more impatient than was strictly polite to behold the manuscripts, he enquired

for them so continually, that his crafty host thought it was full time to show him an improvement which he had designed upon his estate, and which intended, as may be guessed, the addition of another territory to his own.

The gentleman, who, along with alchemy and the other sciences, had studied landscape gardening, made no difficulties; so mounting their horses, they rode towards the middle of the estate into a deep forest, the gentleman discoursing by the way, for the last time in his life possibly, on the cultivation of the cedar. The miser, with a dagger in his sleeve, rode closely by his side, commenting from time to time on the growth of his trees, and at length bade his companion look towards the right, through a certain little vista, which opened towards the setting sun, now shining very gorgeously in the west. The unwary gentleman, accordingly turned his head on that side—but he had scarcely glanced on that golden light of heaven, when the miser suddenly smote him a savage

blow on the left breast, which tumbled him off his horse.

The stroke, however, though so well directed, alighted luckily on a small volume of a favourite author, which the gentleman wore constantly in his bosom. So that learning, which has brought so many to poverty and a miserable end, was for this once the salvation of a life.

At first the victim was stunned awhile by the fall, and especially by the shocking treachery of his relation, who seeing how matters went, leapt quickly down to dispatch him, but the gentleman, though a scholar, made a vigorous defence, and catching hold of the miser's arm with the dagger, he began to plead in very natural terms (for at other times he was a little pedantical) for his life.

"Oh, my kinsman," said he, "why will you kill me, who have never wished you any harm in my days, but on the contrary have always loved you faithfully, and concerned myself at every opportunity about your health and well-

fare. Consider, besides, I beg of you, how nearly we are allied in blood: though it is a foul crime for any man to lift an unbrotherly hand against another, yet in our case it is thrice unnatural. Remember the awful curse of Cain; which for this very act will pursue you: and for your own sake as well as mine, do not incur so terrible a penalty. Think how presumptuous it is to take a life of God's own gracious creation, and to quench a spark, which, in after remorse, you cannot by any means rekindle; nay, how much more horrible it must be still, to slay an immortal soul, as you thus hazard, by sending me to my audit with all my crimes still unrepented upon my head. Look here at this very blood, which you have drawn from my hand in our struggle, how naturally it reproaches and stains you; for which reason, God doubtless made it of that blushing hue, that it might not be shed thus wantonly. This little wound alone, wrings me with more pain than I have ever caused to

any living creature, but you cannot destroy me without still keener anguish and the utmost agonies.' And why, indeed, should you slay me? not for my riches, of which we have both of us more than enough, or if you wanted, Heaven knows how freely I would share my means with you. I cannot believe you so base as to murder me for such unprofitable lucre, but doubtless I have offended you, in some innocent way, to provoke this malice. If I have, I will beseech your pardon a thousand times over, from the simple love that I bear you; but do not requite me for an imaginary wrong so barbarously. Pray, my dear kinsman, spare me! Do not cut me off thus untimely in the happy prime of my days,—from the pleasant sunshine, and from the blessed delights of nature, and from my harmless books, (for he did not forget those) and all the common joys of existence. It is true, I have no dear wife or children to weep for me, but I have many kindly friends that will grieve

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for my death, besides all the poor peasants on my estates, who will fall, I fear, under a harder lordship. Pray, my kinsman, spare me!"

But the cruel miser, in reply, only struggled to release himself, and at last prevailing, he smote the other once or twice again with his dagger, but not dangerously.

Now it happened that the noted robber Pazzo, whom I have already mentioned, was making a round in the forest at the same time with the two kinsmen, and thanking providence, that had thrown into his path so rich a prize, (for the rogue was very devout in his own way,) he watched them along the road, for a favourable opportunity of assaulting them, and so became a witness of this murderous transaction.

Pazzo himself was a brave man, and not especially cruel; thus he was not sorry to see that a part of his office was about to be performed by another, and probably too, he was secretly gratified, to observe that a rich and reputable man could behave himself so like a despised

robber: howbeit, he no ways interfered, but warily ambushed himself behind a large cork tree to behold the sequel.

He was near enough to hear all the speeches that passed between them, so that having still some human kindliness at the bottom of his heart, it was soon awakened by the gentleman's eloquent pleadings for his life: but when the assassin began to attack him afresh, the cruelty of the act struck on him so forcibly, that he instantly leaped out upon the blood-thirsty miser, and tore him down to the ground. He was then going to dispatch him without further delay, but the generous kinsman entreating most earnestly for the wretch's life, and promising any sum for his ransom, Pazzo, with great reluctance, allowed him to remain unhurt. He bound his hands together, notwithstanding, and detained him as his prisoner; but he would accept of no money, nor of any favour from the grateful gentleman, except a promise that he would use his interest with government in be-

half of any of the banditti who should fall into the hands of the police.

They then parted with mutual courtesy; the gentleman returning home, and Pazzo repairing with his captive to the mountains, where he bestowed him as a legacy to his comrades, desiring them to liberate him only for an enormous ransom. This sum was soon sent to their rendezvous, as agreed upon by his kinsman; whereupon the miser was suffered to depart; and thenceforwards he cherished a gentleness of heart, which he had been taught to value by some sufferings amongst the mountains.

As for the gentleman, he resumed his harmless and beloved studies, till being over persuaded to publish a metaphysical work, on which he had been engaged for some years, the critics did for him what his kinsman had been unable to effect, and he died of chagrin. The miser thus attained in the end to his object, of inheriting the whole of the estates; but he en-

joyed them very briefly, and on his death the family of Malatesti became extinct.

The ransom-money Pazzo distributed amongst his comrades, and then renounced for ever his former course of life; confessing that what had passed between the two kinsmen had held up to him such an odious pattern of his own wicked practices, that he repented bitterly of the acts of violence and injustice he had committed in his profession. In this manner he justified the sayings with which I set out in my story; and afterwards, entering into the Venetian navy, he served with great credit against the Turks and infidels, and died at last bravely fighting with those enemies of our religion.

THE CARRIER'S WIFE.

"It 's O for meat, it 's O for drink,
And love the best of all the three!
Though gear is scant, I 'd never want,
An' my good man were kind to me."

OLD BALLAD.

THE CARRIER'S WIFE.

In the suburbs of Strasburg there lived a certain poor woman, by trade a sempstress, who was called Margaret. She was of the middle age; but so cheerful and sweet tempered, and besides so comely, and of such honest repute, that many tradesmen of respectable condition would have been glad to marry her. She had contracted herself, however, to one Kolmarr; a plausible fellow and a carrier, but in reality a smuggler and a very ruffian. Accordingly, whilst their honeymoon was yet in the wane, he began to use her very shamefully, till at last she was worse treated than his mules;

upon which he made her to attend whilst he was smoking and drinking with his dissolute comrades.

Margaret, notwithstanding, being very humble and industrious, would never have repined at this drudgery; but on any ill luck which happened to him, his contraband wares being sometimes seized upon by the spies, he would beat her in a cruel manner. She concealed this treatment, however, from every body, hoping some day to reclaim him by her kindness—never reproaching him, indeed, but by haggard and careful looks, which she could not help, for she shrank as often under the pinching hand of want as from that of her brutal husband. Her beauty and strength thus decaying together, she became at last so disgusting to him, that if he had not been as cautious and crafty as he was cruel, he would have killed her without delay. As it was, he almost starved her, professing extreme poverty; at which Margaret

never murmured, but only grieved for his sake over his pretended losses.

One day, as she was thus sitting disconsolate at her needle-work, and thinking over her hard condition, she heard a gentle knocking at the door, and going to see who it was, she beheld her cousin, a pedlar, who travelled through the country with his box of wares. At first sight of him she was very joyful, not having seen him for many years, but her heart soon sank again into despondence, when she remembered how wretchedly she must entertain him, if at all; for if Kolmarr knew that she bestowed even a crust of bread, he would certainly beat her. She bade her relation, however, to come in and rest himself.

"Alas!" she said, "I have nothing to give thee for thy supper, the house is so bare; and what is worse, I dare not make amends to thee with a night's lodging, for my husband is a very shy, reserved man, who cannot endure the pre-

sence of a stranger: if he found any one here, therefore, at his return, although he is kind enough upon other occasions, he would certainly chide me."

Her kinsman, after musing a little while over these words, answered her thus:

"Margaret, I perceive how it is. But do not be uneasy: the best houses may be found unprovided by a random comer. I am prepared, you see, against such emergencies: here is a flask of good wine, with a dried fish or two, and a handful of raisins,—of which I shall be glad to see you partake. Come, fall to;" and laying out his stores upon the table, he began to sup merrily.

Margaret, at this sight, was more alarmed than ever; nevertheless, after many persuasions she began to eat also, but casting her eyes continually towards the door, as if she feared a visit from an Apennine wolf. The time still drawing nearer for Kolmarr to return, she begged her kinsman to dispatch his meal, as he

loved her, and then depart. "I will even do as you say," said he, still misunderstanding her; "so now show me to my chamber."

To this, Margaret in great alarm replied with what she had told him before, beseeching him not to take it ill of her that he could not sleep in her house; but to believe that she regarded it as one of her many misfortunes.

"I understand you," said he, "very well; but pray make me no more such excuses. I have told you I am not a man to quarrel with my accommodation. Though the bed be harder, and the sheets more coarse and ragged than you care to treat me with—I should lie very thankfully on the floor. So no words, woman, for hence I will not to-night for a king's bed of down."

Margaret, finding him so positive, and observing, besides, that he was flushed with wine, was fain to humour him; however, as she knew he was a discreet man, and that he would depart before sunrise, she hoped he might be

lodged there that one night without the knowledge of Kolmarr. She took him up, therefore, into the garret, which contained nothing but a low sorry bed and a long stout rope, which Kolmarr had left there, probably, to tempt her to hang herself; for she had sometimes slept there alone when he ill-treated her. Her cousin, nevertheless, swore that it was a lodging for a prince.

"Nay," quoth she, "you are kind enough to view it so; but it is grievously troubled with the rats, as I have had cause to know;" and then hastily bidding him good night, she went down the stairs again, with her eyes brimful of tears.

After she had been down a little while, Kolmarr knocked at the door, which made Margaret almost fall from her chair. He came in soberly, but in a grave humour, and observing how red her eyes were, he pulled her to him, and kissed her with much apparent affection. The poor woman was too full at

heart to speak; but throwing her lean arms round his neck, she seemed to forget in that moment all her troubles; and still more when Kolmarr, with a terrible oath, swore that after that night he would never fret her again.

The grateful Margaret, being very humble and weak-spirited, was ready to fall down on her knees to him for this unusual kindness, and her conscience smiting her, she was just going to confess to him the concealment of her cousin, and to beseech his forgiveness for that disobedience, as the first she had ever committed as his wife. But luckily she held her peace, for her fears still prevailed over her; and on these terms they bestowed themselves together for the night.

Now it was Kolmarr's custom of a night, to pay a visit to his stable; he, as a rogue himself, being very fearful of the dishonesty of others; for which reason he likewise locked behind him the door of his bed-chamber, in which he deposited his commodities. About midnight, there-

fore, Margaret heard him go down as usual, but his stay was three times as long as ever it had been before. She became very uneasy at this circumstance; and moreover, at a strong smoke which began to creep into the chamber; whereupon, going to the window, she heard Kolmarr beneath, moaning like a person in great pain. In answer to her questions, he told her he had been beaten by some robbers, who had taken away his mules, and then set fire to the house.

"The back of it," said he, "is all wrapt in a flame; but what most grieves me of all, my dear Margaret, is that I cannot rescue thee; seeing that in my strife with the villains, I have lost the key of the outer-door. Nevertheless, if thou wilt take courage and cast thyself down, I will catch thee in my arms; or at the worst, I have dragged hither a great heap of straw, so that no harm may befal thy precious limbs."

The crafty ruffian, however, intended her no kinder reception than the hard bare earth would afford to her miserable bones. His brutality being well known in the country, he did not care to kill her openly; whereas, in this way he hoped to make it apparent that her death was caused by accident; and besides, as it would be in a manner by her own act, he flattered himself there would be the less guilt upon his head.

The window being very far from the ground, Margaret, however, hesitated at the fall: and in the meantime the pedlar awaked; and smelling the smoke, and going forth to the window above, he overheard the entreaties of Kolmarr. The danger, by his account, was very imminent; so stepping in again for his pack, which was very heavy, the pedlar pitched it out in the dark upon Kolmarr; who immediately began to groan in the most dismal earnest. The pedlar, knowing how heavy the box was,

and hearing the crash, with the lamentations that followed, made no doubt that he had done for the man beneath; so, without staying to make any fruitless enquiries, he groped about for the rope which he had noticed in the chamber, and knotting it here and there, and tying one end of it to the bed, he let himself down, as nimbly as a cat, to his kinswoman's window. Margaret, touched by the moans of her husband, had just made up her mind to leap down at a venture, when the pedlar withheld her; and being very stout and active, he soon made shift to lower her down safely to the ground, and then followed himself, like a sailor, by means of the rope.

As soon as Margaret was on her feet, she sought for Kolmarr, who by this time was as quiet as a stone, and made no answer to her enquiries; the pedlar, therefore, concluded justly that he was dead, and speedily found out with his fingers, that there was a great hole in the

wretch's skull. At first he was very much shocked and troubled by this discovery; but afterwards, going behind the house, and seeing the smouldering remains of a heap of straw, which Kolmarr had lighted, he comprehended the whole matter, and was comforted. Then bringing Margaret, who was lamenting very loudly, to the same spot, he showed her the ashes, and told her how foolish it was to mourn so for a wicked man, who had died horribly through his own plotting against her life.

"The devices of the bloody man," said he, "have fallen upon his own head. Consider this, therefore, as the good deed of Providence, which, pitying your distresses, has ordained you a happier life hereafter; and for your maintenance, if God should fail to provide you, I will see to it myself."

In this manner, comforting her judiciously, Margaret dried her tears, reflecting as many women do, but with less reason, that she must

needs be happier as a widow than she had ever been as a wife. As for what he had promised, her kinsman faithfully kept his word, sending her from time to time a portion of his gains; so that, with her old trade of sempstress, and the property of Kolmarr, she was maintained in comfort, and never knew want all the rest of her days.

THE TWO

FAITHFUL LOVERS OF SICILY.

Our bark at length has found a quiet harbour,
And the unspotted progress of our loves
Ends not alone in safety but reward.

THE CUSTOM OF THE COUNTRY.

THE TWO

FAITHFUL LOVERS OF SICILY.

In the Island of Sicily, there lived a beautiful girl called Biancafiore, whose father was a farmer of the imposts in that kingdom; she had several lovers, but the happiest one was Tebaldo Zanche, a young person of gentle birth but of indifferent estate, which caused him to be more favourably regarded by Bianca than her father desired, who had set his heart upon matching her with a certain wealthy merchant of Palermo. The power of a parent in those days being much more despotic than in our temperate times, the poor wretched girl was finally compelled to

bestow her hand on the merchant, whereupon Tebaldo instantly took leave of his country, and with a hopeless passion at heart wandered over Europe.

As soon as she was married, Bianca was taken by her husband to his country-house, which was situated on the sea-coast, towards Girgenti, his chief delight being to watch the ships, as they fared to and fro on their mercantile embassies, whereas they only recalled to Bianca the small white sail which had disappeared with the unfortunate Tebaldo. This prospect of itself was sufficient to aggravate her melancholy, but her residence on the sea-shore was yet to expose her to still greater miseries.

It was not uncommon in those days, for the Barbary cruisers, those hawks of the Mediterranean, to make a sudden stoop upon our coasts, and carry off with them, besides other plunder, both men and women, whom they sold into slavery amongst the Moors, in default of ransom. In this manner, making a descent by night

when Mercanti was absent at Palermo, they burnt and plundered his house, and took away Bianca; whose horror you may well conceive, when by the blazing light of her own dwelling, she was carried off by such swarthy barbarians, whose very language was a sphynx's riddle to her, and might concern her life or death, and then embarked upon a sea of fire; for there happened that night a phenomenon not unusual in the Mediterranean, namely, the phosphorescence of the waters, which, whether caused by glowing marine insects or otherwise, makes the waves roll like so many blue burning flames. Those who have witnessed it, know well its dismal appearance on a gloomy night, when the billows come and vanish away like fluxes of pallid fire, and withal so vapour-like and unsubstantial, that apparently the vessel, or any gross corporal substance, must needs sink into its ghastly abyss. With such a dreary scene, therefore, and in the midst of those tawny-coloured infidel Moors, with their savage visages

and uncouth garments and glittering arms, 'tis no marvel if Bianca thought herself amongst infernals and the demons of torture, on the sulphurous lake.

On the morrow, which scarcely brought any assuagement of her fears, they had lost sight of Sicily, and at last she was disembarked at Oran, which is an African port, over against Spain. Meanwhile Tebaldo was landing at Palermo, where he learnt, with a renewal of all his pangs, the fate of his beloved mistress. Forgetting all his enmity, therefore, he repaired presently to Mercanti, to concert with him how to redeem her out of the hands of the accursed Moors, a proceeding which he would not have paused for, had fortune put it in his power to proceed instantly to her ransom.

The merchant lamenting his years and infirmities, which forbade him to go in search of his wife, Tebaldo readily offered himself to proceed in his behalf; adding, "that it was only through the poverty of his means that he had not sailed

already at his own suggestion, but that if Mercanti would furnish him with the requisite sums, he should hope to restore the unfortunate Bianca to his arms." The merchant wondering very much at this proposal, and asking, what securities he could offer for such a trust,—

"Alas!" quoth Tebaldo, "I have nothing to pledge for my performance, except an unhappy love for her, that would undergo thrice-told perils for her sake; I am that hopeless Tebaldo Zanche, who was made so eminently miserable by her marriage: nevertheless, I will forgive that, as well as all other mischances, if I may but approve my honourable regard for her, by this self-devoted service. There are yet some reasonable doubts you may well entertain of my disinterestedness and fidelity on such a mission, and I know not how to remove them; but when you think of the dangerous infidels in whose hands she now is, I have a hope that you may bring yourself to think her as safe at least in mine."

The passionate Tebaldo enforced these arguments with so many sincere tears and solemn oaths, and, besides, depicted so naturally the horrible condition of the lady amongst the Moors, that at last the merchant consented to his request, and furnishing him with the proper authorities, the generous lover, with a loyal heart, which designed nothing less than he had professed, set sail on his arduous adventure.

Let us pass over the hardships and dangers of such an enterprize, and above all its cruel anxieties, the hopes which were raised at Tunis being wrecked again at Algiers, till at last he discovered Bianca amongst the slaves of a chief pirate at Oran, who, despairing of a ransom, began to contemplate her as his own mistress. Tebaldo's bargain was soon made; whereupon the lady was set at liberty, and to her unspeakable joy, by the hands of her own beloved Zanche; yet when they remembered the final consequence of her freedom, the brightness of their delight was quenched with some

very bitter tears. The generosity of their natures, however, triumphed over these regrets, and with sad hearts, but full of virtuous resolution, they re-embarked together, in a Genoese carrack for Palermo.

And now their evil fortune still pursued them, for falling in with a Sallee rover, although they escaped a second capture by the fast-sailing of their ship, they were chased a long way out of their course, into the Straits of Gibraltar, and the wind turning contrary, increased towards night to a violent tempest. In this extremity it required all the tenderness of Tebaldo to encourage Bianca, whose low-spirited condition made her more fearfully alive to the horrors of the raging sea; which indeed roared round them as if the watery desert had hungry lions of its own, as well as the sandy wastes of Africa, but ten times more terrible; the ship's timbers, besides, straining as if they would part asunder, and the storm howling through the cordage, like the voices of those evil angels,

who, it is believed, were cast into the dreadful deep.

When the daylight appeared there was no glimpse of any land, but the ship was tossing in the centre of a mere wilderness of sea, and under the pitch-black and troubled clouds, which were still driving by a fierce wind towards the south. The sails were torn into shreds, and the mariners, ignorant of where they were, let the ship drift at the mercy of the unmerciful elements, which slacked not their fury because the prey no longer resisted, but assaulted the helpless bark with unmitigated rage.

It could be no great wrong of Tebaldo and Bianca, if, at such a time, they exchanged one embrace together in everlasting farewell. They then composed themselves to die calmly as became them, in each other's company; not with any vain shrieks or struggles; but heroically, as they had lived and loved. Thus sitting together in a martyr-like mood, and listening to the

awful rushes of the waters across the deck, they heard a sudden noise overhead, which caused Tebaldo to look forth, and, lo! there were the drunken mariners, putting off from the ship's side in the long-boat, being beguiled to their fate by a glimpse of land, which none but their experienced eyes could yet discover. However, they had not struggled far with their oars, when three monstrous curling billows, a great deal loftier than any of the rest, turned the boat over and over, washing out all the poor gasping souls that were therein, whom the ensuing waves swallowed up one by one, without letting even their dying cries be heard through the bewildering foam.

After this sacrifice, as though it had appeased the angry Deity of the ocean, the storm sensibly subsided; and in an hour or two, the skies clearing up, Tebaldo perceived that they were off a small solitary island—the ship soon after striking upon a coral reef, about two hundred fathoms from the shore. The skies still

frowning with a rearward storm, Tebaldo lost no time in framing a rude raft, with spars and empty barrels; upon which placing Bianca, with such stores and implements as he could collect, he paddled towards the land, where they landed safely upon a little sandy beach.

Their first act was to return thanks to God for their miraculous preservation: after which they partook of a repast, that after their fatigues was very needful; and then ascended a gentle sloping hill which gave them a prospect of the island. It was a small, verdant place, without any human inhabitants,—but there were millions of marine birds upon the rocks, as tame as domestic fowls, and a prodigious number of rabbits; the interior country, besides, seemed well wooded with various trees: and the ground furnished divers kinds of herbs, and some very gigantic vegetables, together with many European flowers, the transportation of which to such desolate and insular places is a mystery to this day.

The weather again turning boisterous, they took shelter in a rocky cavern, which the kind hand of Nature had scooped out so commodiously, that it seemed to have been provided with a foresight of their wants. Thus, with their stores from the ship, they were insured against any great present hardships—but one. Many unlucky lovers, I wot, have sighed for such an island, to take refuge in from the stern-hearted world; yet here were two such fond persons in such an asylum, betwixt whom fate had set up an eternal bar! Such thoughts as this could not but present themselves very sorrowfully to the minds of Tebaldo and Bianca; nevertheless, he served her with the most tender and devoted homage, and as love taught him, contributed, by a thousand apt contrivances, to her comfort and ease.

In this manner suppose them to spend five or six days—the cave being their shelter, and Tebaldo, by fishing, or fowling, or ensnaring the conies, providing a change of food; so that, ex-

cepting the original hardship of their fortune, the lovers had little cause to complain. Their solitary condition, however, and the melancholy of Bianca, led to many little acts of fondness from Tebaldo, which were almost as painful to exchange as to withhold. It was no wonder, then, if sometimes in the anguish of his heart, some expressions of impatience burst from his lips, to which she answered with her tears.

At last, one day when they were sitting on a gusty rock, which overlooked the sea, they both turned at once towards each other, with adverse faces and so despairing a look, that they cast themselves by common consent into each other's arms. In the next moment, however, forcing themselves asunder, Tebaldo began as follows, whilst Bianca covered her face with her hands:—

"I can bear this cruel life no longer! better were we far apart, as when you were living in Sicily, and I roaming for unattainable peace all over the world. The restraint of distance was

dreadful but involuntary, and nothing so painful as this! Your tears flow before my sight, yet I must not kiss them away without trembling, nor soothe your audible grief upon my bosom—nor mingle my sighs with yours, though we breathe the same limited air and not in a distant clime. We were made for each other, as our mutual love acknowledges; and yet here, where there be none besides ourselves, we must be several and estranged. My heart is torn asunder by such imperative contradictions. Methinks there be but us two real creatures in the world, and yet the horrible phantom of a third steps in between and frowns us miserably apart! Oh, Bianca! I am crazed with doubts I dare hardly to name; but if fate did not mean to unite us in revocation of its former cruelty, why should we be thus thrown together, where there are none besides? As eternal a bar as was set up between us, is now fixed between you and your husband; nature herself, by this hopeless separation, divorcing you from all

other ties. God knows with what scrupulous exactness I have aimed at the fulfilment of my promise—but it were hard to be bound to an impracticable solution. It was true we might not thus think of each other in Sicily—but we meet here as if beyond the grave. If we are, as I believe, in the forlorn centre of the vast ocean, what reasonable hope is there of our redemption:—since then, we are to spend the rest our days together in this place, we can wrong no one, but redress a great wrong to ourselves, by the stricter union of our fates, which are thus far already married together, until the tomb."

The miserable Bianca wept abundantly at this discourse: however, she begged that Tebaldo would not mention the subject for at least seven more days, in which time she hoped God might save them from such a step by sending some ship to their succour. She spent almost all this interval in watching from the coast, but still there came no vessel, not so much even as a speck on the horizon, to give

her any hope of return. Tebaldo then resuming his arguments, she answered him thus:—

" Oh, my dearest Tebaldo ! let us rather die as we have lived, victims of implacable fate, than cast any reproach upon our innocent loves. As it is, no one can reprove our affection, which, though violently controlled, we have never disavowed; but it would kill me to have to blush for its unworthy close. It is true that in one point we are disunited, but there is no distance between our souls. We may not indeed gratify our fondness by caresses, but it is still something to bestow our kindest language, and looks, and prayers, and all lawful and honest attentions upon each other; nay, do not you furnish me with the means of life and every thing that I enjoy? which my heart tells me must be a very grateful office to your love. Be content, then, to be the preserver and protector, and the very comforter of my life, which it is happiness enough for me to owe to your loving hands. It is true that another man is

my husband, but you are my guardian angel, and show a love for me that as much surpasses his love as the heavenly nature is above the earthly. I would not have you stoop from this pitch, as you needs must—by a defect of virtue and honour; still, if you insist, I will become what you wish, but I beseech you consider, ere that decision, the debasement which I must suffer in your esteem. Nevertheless, before such an evil hour, I hope God will send some ship to remove us, though, if I might prefer my own sinful will before His, I would rather of all be dead."

The despairing lovers at these words wished mutually in their hearts, that they had perished together in the waves that were fretting before them,—when Bianca, looking up towards the horizon, perceived the masts and topmost sails of a ship, whose hull was still hidden by the convexity of the waters. At this sight, though it had come seemingly at her own invocation, she turned as pale as marble, and with a falter-

ing voice bade Tebaldo observe the vessel, which with a deathlike gaze he had already fixed in the distance :—for doubtless they would rather have remained as they were till they died, than return to the separation which awaited them in Sicily :—however, the ship still approached with a fair wind, and at last put out a pinnace, which made directly towards the island.

And now Tebaldo became a bitter convertite from his own arguments, confessing that it was better to breathe only the same air constantly with Bianca, than to resign her companionship to another ; neither did she refuse to partake in his regrets: and more tears were never shed by any exiles on the point of returning to their native land. With heavy hearts, therefore, they descended, hand in hand, like the first pair of lovers when they quitted their paradise, to whom, no doubt, these sad Sicilians inwardly compared themselves, as they walked lingeringly to meet the boat, which belonged to a vessel of Genoa, and had been sent to obtain a supply

of wood and water. The mariners wondered very much at their appearance, and especially at Bianca, who wore a fantastical cap, made of rabbit skins, with a cloak of the same motley fur to defend her from the sharp sea air; and as for Tebaldo, his garments were as motley as hers, being partly seaman's apparel and partly his own, whilst his beard and mustaches had grown to a savage length.

The sailors, however, took them very willingly on board, where they inquired eagerly concerning Mercanti; but although the captain knew him well, having often carried his freightages, he could give no tidings of his estate. He promised, notwithstanding, to touch at Palermo; whither the ship made a very brief passage, to the infinite relief of the lovers; for now, after all their misfortunes, they were about to return to the same miserable point where they began. Bianca, therefore, spent the whole time of the voyage in grieving apart in her own cabin, not daring to trust herself in sight of

Tebaldo; who, on his part, at the prospect of their separation after such an intimate communion of danger and distresses, was ready to cast himself into the sea.

Suppose them, then, arrived at Palermo, where Tebaldo, with a sadder heart than he had foreseen, proceeded to complete his undertaking, by rendering up Bianca to her husband. He repaired, therefore, to the house, and inquired for Mercanti; whereupon, being shown into his presence—

"I am come," said he, "to render up my trust, and would to God that my life were a part of the submission. I have redeemed your wife, at the cost of your ten thousand florins and some perils besides; for which, if you owe me any thing, I leave her my executor, for I have nothing left me now but to die."

The merchant, looking somewhat amazed at his discourse, then answered him thus:—

"If the lady you speak of is the wife of my brother, Gio. Mercanti, he has been dead these

three months; but I shall rejoice to see her, and, likewise, to make over the properties that belong to her by his bequest. And for the eminent service you have rendered to her, for my late brother's sake, I will gratefully repay you; his last words having been full of concern for his dear lady, and of confidence in the integrity of the Signor Tebaldo Zanche; which name, I doubt not, you have made honourable in your own person. I beseech of you, therefore, to lead me instantly to my kinswoman, that I may entertain her as she deserves."

The overjoyed Tebaldo, without waiting to make any answer to these courtesies, ran instantly on board ship to Bianca; who now, without any reserve, cast herself into his loving arms. She did not forget, however, the tears that were due to the generosity of her dead husband, but mourned for him a decent season; after which, with the very good-will of her parents and all parties, she gave her hand to

the faithful Tebaldo. Thus, after many trials, which they endured nobly, they were finally made happy, as their long misfortunes and virtue well deserved; and their names are preserved unto this day, as the Two Faithful Lovers of Sicily.

THE VENETIAN COUNTESS.

"The fire straight upward bears the souls in breath:
Visions of horror circle in the flame,
With shapes and figures like to that of Death."

ALAHAM.

The Venetian Countefs.

Vol 2.

Designed & Drawn on Stone by T. Dighton.

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THE VENETIAN COUNTESS.

THE face of the Countess Rovinello, in the portrait which is still in the family palace at Venice, bears many signs of that stern and gloomy disposition, which produced such bitter fruits in the end to herself and to others. The nose, more Roman than aquiline, resembling the features of the Cæsars, denotes forcibly her masculine firmness and determination of purpose; her dark eyes and lowering brow the pride of her heart, scarcely lower than that of the fallen Angel; and her puckered curling lip, the scorn and cruelty of her humour. Ambitious, inflexible, and haughty by nature, she was by education subtle, unmerciful, and

a bigot; the confessor Landino, a Jesuit, being constantly at her elbow, and holding the secret direction of all her affairs.

This man coming one day into her chamber, discovered the Countess in a fit of uncontrollable rage, a thing in her very unusual; for she disdained, generally, to show any outward signs of her emotions. Mistrustful, therefore, of her own voice, lest it should falter, she held out an open letter, her hand quaking all the time like an aspen leaf, and made a motion for Landino to read it; who, as soon as he had glanced at the writing, gave back the paper with these words:—

"This affair is old news with me. The blind passion of your son for the young English heretic was well known to me months ago, and nothing has been omitted to break off so scandalous a match. I have many skilful agents in England, but for this once they have been frustrated in their endeavours."

"Father," returned the offended Countess,

"you are prudent and wise in most cases: but would it not have been as well to have shared your information with myself. The authority of a mother, in such a matter, might have had some weight in the scale."

"We have not failed," said Landino, "to menace him in the name of the Holy Church, the mother of his soul, whose mandates in authority exceed those of the mother of his body. As for your ignorance, it was a needful precaution, that any acts of severity might seem the inflictions of the spiritual parent rather than your own."

The Countess nodded her head gravely at this speech, to signify that she understood the hint of Landino, notwithstanding she felt anger enough at heart to have made her agree to any measures, however cruel, for the prevention of so hateful a marriage. Her great confidence, however, in the skill and subtlety of the confessor, assured her that no means had been omitted for that design, and now it only remained to concert

together by what means they could separate the young people from each other. In the meanwhile, the artful Landino had craft enough to discover that the Countess meditated a match for her son, which would not have suited certain political views of his own; accordingly he changed his game, resolving that the marriage of Rovinelli and the young English lady should stand good, trusting that he could afterwards mould it to his purpose.

"What you say of separating them," he said, "is well enough, as far as the mere punishment of the parties is concerned: but we must look beyond that, to other considerations. Nothing would be more easy, as you know, than to annul the marriage, for which the Holy Church hath ample power and a sufficient good will; but it will be a more difficult thing to disentangle their affections from each other. Granted, then, though you should even tear away your son by force from the arms of the heretic, it will be impossible to drive him against his will into any

other alliance. As for the girl, she is of gentle birth and a large fortune, and for loveliness might be one of the angels, seeing which, it is a pity but to think on the peril of her immortal soul. Such a woman, as the wife of your son, brings us endless sorrow and shameful annoy, whereas such a convert, would tend to our infinite honour, and at the same time prevent the misery of the young people here, as well as the perdition of a soul hereafter."

The Countess understood clearly the drift of this discourse; and after some further arguments it was agreed, that she should receive the young people with an apparant kindness, and induce them to reside with her for some time at the palace, during which, she was to exert her joint influence with Landino, to convert the young lady to the Roman Catholic faith.

It was with many justifiable misgivings that Rovinello contemplated the introduction of his beautiful bride to his mother, for he knew her implacable nature. Notwithstanding, with the

fond imagination of a lover, he hoped that the loveliness and gentle manners of his mistress would finally overcome even the most stubborn of prejudices. Trusting in this delusion, he took his wife to the palace of the Countess, who was sitting, when they entered, on a couch at the further end of the apartment; but Rovinello could perceive a look on her countenance that filled him with despair; for her dark eyes were fixed upon him quite motionless, like those of a statue, and her lips were utterly white through passionate compression. Notwithstanding that the young pair had advanced to the middle of the chamber, she never rose from her seat, till Rovinello, coming up to her very feet, with a faltering voice presented the young lady to her notice.

The inflexible Countess, in return, merely fixed her eyes on the Englishwoman, who at this strange reception began to shake all over with fear; and the more, because she felt the

hand of Rovinello trembling within her own. After a long silence, more dreadful than any words, the timid creature, plucking up her courage a little, began to speak as follows, with great sweetness of tone and manner:—

"Pray, madam, do not scorn to receive me as your child, for I have no parent in this far off land, unless the mother of my dear Rovinello. I cannot bear to think that I am hateful to any one that regards him with affection: pray, therefore, do not spurn me thus from your heart."

At the last of these words the Countess rose up, and with a tone at once calm and stern, and a befitting look, desired the young lady to kneel down and receive her blessing. The obedient girl, with bended knees and clasped hands, stooped down as she was commanded, at the feet of the haughty Countess; and in this position heard, but only half comprehended, in Latin, the following sentences:—

"From my mouth and from my heart, I

curse thee, wicked heretic. I commend thee to flames here, and to flames hereafter. Amen. Amen."

I have said that the Englishwoman did not quite comprehend these words; but she saw by the ghastly countenance of Rovinello that they were very horrible. As for that unhappy gentleman, he let go the hand of his wife, and grasping his forehead between his palms, as though it were about to burst asunder, he staggered a step or two apart, and leaned quite stunned and bewildered against the wall of the chamber. His cruel mother noticing this movement, cast a fiercer look than ever towards the speechless lady, and then turning towards Rovinello, addressed him thus:—

"Son, thou hast come home to me this day after years of travel; but in such a manner, that I would rather behold thee crucified;" and with that she pointed to a large ebony cross, whereon was the figure of our blessed Saviour curiously carved in ivory; the holy blood-drops

being represented by rubies, so as to form a more lively effigy of the divine sacrifice.

It was made evident by these speeches, that the implacable temper of the Countess had overcome all the counsels of Landino, who entered just at this moment, to perceive that his arguments had been in vain. He reproved her with some asperity, for her unchristian spirit, and her temper being by this time cool enough, to be restrained by policy, by dint of much dissembling there was an apparent reconciliation between all the parties. Thus, it was arranged as had been concerted beforehand, Rovinello consenting, with great satisfaction, to pass some months with his wife in the palace of his mother.

The unhappy Englishwoman, however, though now living under the same roof with the Countess, and caressed by her every day, began soon to find this reconcilement more intolerable than the former estrangement. At length, Rovinello seeing her grow more and more dejected,

her beautiful eyes being filled with tears whenever he returned to her, after even an hour's absence, began to inquire the cause.

" Alas !" she said, " I have cause enough to weep; for I am treated here with such a cruel kindness, that but for your dear love, I should wish myself a hundred times a day in my peaceable grave;—for I am assured, every hour, that the souls of my dear honoured parents are at this very time suffering unspeakable torments; a saying which, whether true or false, ought to cost me a great deal of misery or displeasure. To aggravate these feelings, the confessor Landino exhorts me so constantly to secure myself from the like perdition, that satisfied with a heart to love thee withal, I wish, sometimes, that I had no soul at all to care for."

Having spoken thus with some bitterness of manner, she again fell a weeping; whereupon, Rovinello, touched with her tears, declared that her peace should no longer be assailed by such arguments; and in truth, having sojourned

some years in England, his own sentiments on such matters partook of the liberality and freedom which belong seemingly to the very atmosphere of that fortunate country. Accordingly, after making various excuses to his mother, he set off with his lady to a country-seat, which was situated on the sea-coast; and here they lived together for some months very happily.

At the end of that time, Rovinello received one day a letter which required his immediate attendance at Rome, and taking a very tender farewell of his lady, he departed. His affairs detained him four or five days at the capital, and then he returned home with all possible speed, indulging in a thousand fanciful pictures by the way, of his wife's joyful endearments at his return; whereas, when he reached the house, he was told that she had been carried off by force, no one knew whither; the servants being taken away likewise in the middle of the night. A Moorish turban, which had been left in one

of the rooms, supplied the only clue for discovery of her destiny, for in those days it was a common thing for the Algerine rovers to make a descent on the Italian coasts. The distracted Rovinello, therefore, went instantly on ship-board, and required to be carried over to Africa, intending at all perils to ransom his dear lady, or partake of the same captivity. There happened to be a neutral ship in the port, so that he engaged a vessel without much difficulty; but he had barely been out at sea a few hours, when fresh thoughts flashed on his mind, now at leisure for deliberate reflection, and made him alter his course. It was ascertained, from other vessels they fell in with, that no Barbary ships had been seen latterly near the coast, and besides, the very partial plunder of his own mansion, in the midst of many others, made it seem an improbable act to have been committed by the pirates; he ordered the helm, therefore, to be put down, and returned immediately to the shore.

And now a dreadful question began to agitate his mind, which, whether with or without reason, was very afflicting to entertain, for it seemed impossible at the first glance, that any womanly heart could be so obdurately cruel and tigerlike, as wilfully to disjoint the married love of himself and his lady by a deed so atrocious; but when he recalled the stern temper of his mother, and above all her horrible malediction, his heart quite misgave him, and delivered him up to the most dreadful of ideas. It was rumoured, indeed, that Landino had lately been seen in the neighbourhood, and there were other suspicious reports afloat amongst the country people; but these things were very vague and contradictory, and all wanted confirmation.

The miserable Rovinello, with these suspicions in his bosom, repaired instantly to Venice, but the Countess was either guiltless or else dissembled so plausibly, that his thoughts became more bewildering than ever, and, at

length, through grief and anxiety, he fell into a raging fever. His mother attended upon him with the most affectionate assiduity, almost to the removal of his doubts; and especially as she seemed to consider his bereavement with a very moderate but sincere sorrow; whereas, to judge by the common rule, if she had disposed herself of the unhappy Englishwoman, she should have been constant and violent in her expressions of condolence.

In this manner several weeks passed away, Rovinello being very languid from his illness; at last, one day, after being more agitated than common, he desired to take an airing with his mother in her coach, and was observed to be particular in giving instructions to the driver as to his route. The man, attending to his commands with exactness, began to drive very slowly towards a certain spot, and at length stopped immediately in front of those terrible Lion's Heads of the Inquisition, which have heretofore swallowed so many secret denunciations. The Countess

asking with some terror, why he lingered at that spot, "I am come here, mother," he said, "to await the result of a very curious speculation."

With these words, he rivetted his intense eyes upon those of the Countess, who very suddenly turned aside, and called out to the driver to go on; but the man remained still, according to the direction of Rovinello. The latter had now raised his lean hand to the coach window, and pointed to the gaping jaws that received the accusations.

"Mother," said he, pray fix your eye-balls stedfastly upon mine; and now tell me, have you never fed yonder cruel Lions?"

Hereupon, he looked stedfastly upon the eyes of the Countess, which seemed instantly to reel in their sockets, and her cheek turned as pale as ashes. Rovinello, convinced of the guiltiness of his mother by her looks, did not wait for any other confession, but plainly saw his lady, as though through the solid stone walls, in the dreary dungeons of the Inquisition.

In the meantime, his hand had dropped from the window to his cloak, where he had concealed a small pistol, loaded with two balls; and setting the fatal engine against his heart, without another word he discharged it into his bosom, before the very eyes of his unnatural parent.

The servants getting down at the report, ran instantly to the door of the carriage, which was filled with smoke, so that at first they could not perceive the nature of the calamity; at length they discerned the Countess, leaning quite senseless against the back of the coach, her clothes bedabbled with blood, and the body of Rovinello stooping forward upon her knees. It was plain that he was quite dead, wherefore, placing the body upon a kind of litter, some of the people carried it home to the palace. The miserable Countess was driven back to the same place, where she continued for many hours in frantic transports of horror and remorse; and when she became calmer, it was only from her strength being so exhausted that she could

neither rave nor writhe herself any longer. As for the confessor Landino, he was never suffered to abide an instant in her presence, though he made many such attempts,—the mere sight of him throwing the wretched Countess into the most frightful ecstasies.

Some days after the catastrophe of Rovinello, there was a procession through the streets of Venice, which excited a lively interest amongst all classes, being nothing less than the progress of certain wicked heretics to the stake, where they were to be burnt, in order that the Christian spirit might revive, like a Phœnix, out of the human ashes. There had not been a festival of this sort for some time before, so that the people prepared for it with great eagerness, all putting on their holiday clothes, and crowding into the streets, almost to their mutual suffocation; the day being very warm, but otherwise as fine and serene as could be desired for such a ceremony.

The number of the wretched criminals was

nine, of whom there was one woman. Their heads were all shaved, and their feet bare, with fetters round the ankles and wrists of each person. They were dressed in long, yellow penitential robes, painted all over with fiery tongues, or flames, except on the back, where there was a large blood-red cross. Their caps were of the same colours, tall and pointed, in shape somewhat like extinguishers, though not intended for that use, and each of the wretches held in the left hand a lighted taper; though this part of the show was rather dimmed by the brightness of the noontide sun. Certain bare-headed friars walked by the side of the criminals, holding up the cross at every few paces before their melancholy eyes, and exhorting them to suffer patiently, and without any impieties, to which the doleful creatures made answer only by their boisterous lamentations.

There were two of the procession, however, who differed in this particular from the rest, the first of them having become an Atheist, it was

said, since his imprisonment by the Holy Office. This obdurate man marched along erect and silently, without either sigh or groan, to the sacrifice, having first cast his taper in scorn amongst the populace, who would fain have torn him in pieces for this act of contempt, but for the consideration that he was going to make a more adequate expiation.

As for the other person who did not join in the clamorous outcries of the rest, this was a female, young and beautiful, and indeed, the wife of the unfortunate Rovinello, though that circumstance was unknown to the generality of the spectators. Her luxuriant hair had all been cut off, and she wore the same cap and robe of humiliation with the others, but in going barefoot, her tender small white feet were tipped with bloody red, like the morning daisies, through trampling on the rugged flinty-hearted stones. Thus she marched beside the Atheist, not a whit more desponding than he, but with a better hope, looking often upward towards the

merciful skies, which contained the spirit of her beloved Rovinello. The multitude beheld her meekness and devout submission, for so it seemed to them, with great satisfaction, nor did the friars omit to point her out frequently, for the edification of the bystanders.

And now, being come to the appointed spot, which was a convenient open space, the usual preparations were made for the burning. In the middle of the area stood four goodly stakes, which as well as the faggots had been smeared over with pitch and tar, that they might blaze the fiercer. The Chief Inquisitor, with the brethren of the Holy Office, were comfortably seated in front, to overlook the spectacle, and on either side, the court, and the nobility according to their degree; meanwhile the common rabble got such places as they could, some of them even being hoisted up on the shoulders of their fellows. And truly it was a goodly sight to look round on such a noble assemblage, in their robes of state, the very common people having their

holiday suits on, and piety and contentment shining together on every countenance.

After sundry tedious formalities, the abominable Atheist, being the chiefest heretic, was placed foremost, immediately under the eyes of the Grand Inquisitor, who desired nothing so much as the glory of his conversion. The priests of the Holy Office therefore used a thousand arguments to persuade him of his errors; but the desperate man refused to listen to their discourse, replying, when opportunity offered, only by the most scornful expressions. Thus, although there were three friars constantly exhorting him at one time, namely, two Carmelites and a Benedictine, they might as soon have persuaded the north wind to blow southward, as the current of his impiety to take another course.

In order to save him from the guilt of further blasphemies, the Grand Inquisitor made a sign for the faggots (the priests having first duly blessed them) to be heaped around his

feet, hoping by this preparation to terrify him into recantation, whereas the unshrinking heretic looked on with the greatest composure. Observing that he smiled, the Grand Inquisitor demanded the cause of his mirth—for they were near enough to hold a conference together.

"I am thinking," said he, "how yonder bald-pated monks, who are flinching from the heat of the sun, will be able to bear the fiery circles of glory which they promise themselves about their crowns."

At this scoffing answer, his case seeming truly desperate, and his heresy incurable, the fire was ordered to be applied without further delay to the faggots, which kindling up briskly, the scornful countenance of the infidel was soon covered over by a thick cloud of smoke. As soon as the flames reached his flesh, a sharp cry of anguish was heard through the upper vapour, and a priest stepping close in to the

stake, inquired if the criminal yet repented of his damnable errors.

"I called out," said he, "only for a little of your holy water."

The friar, overjoyed at this triumph, stepped back with all haste to get some of the sanctified element, and began to sprinkle him.

"Nay," quoth the relapsing heretic; "I meant it only to be bestowed on these scorching faggots."

At this fresh contempt the wood was stirred briskly up again, and sent forth redoubled volumes of fire and smoke, so that it was evident he would soon be consumed. The flames lapping him quickly all round, and driving the smoke into the upper region, the burning figure could plainly be distinguished in the midst, now thoroughly dead, the wretched man having been stifled in the beginning of the fire. Notwithstanding, on a sudden there was a loud shout from the people, "He

is praying! He is praying!" and, lo! the scorched black carcase was seen plainly to lift its clasped hands towards the skies. Now the case was this, that the cords which confined his arms being burnt asunder by chance, before those which bound his wrists, his arms by the contraction of the sinews were drawn upwards, in the manner I have described—however, the multitude fancied quite otherwise, and the Atheist is affirmed to have become a convert to this very day.

A couple of wicked perverse Jews having been disposed of in the like way, (the rest of the criminals, save the female, being recusants who had been brought to the stake only for the sake of example)—there remained but the young Englishwoman to be dealt with. During the burning of the others, she had remained tied to the stake with the faggots about her feet, and the confessor Landino by her side, who promised himself much glory from her conversion, whereas she never condescended to

listen to his harangues, but with eyes turned upward, and her mind absent, and in a better place, continued her secret prayers with much fortitude and devotion. The dreadful fire-brand, which was made of three torches twisted into one, to typify the holy mystery, being brought in readiness to kindle the fire, Landino besought her to consider whether her tender body could endure such torments.

"By the help of God," she replied, "I will. The smoke of your last offering is already in the skies, and my spirit is fain to follow."

The Grand Inquisitor hearing this answer, delivered with such a resolute tone and look, made a sign to Landino to let him speak.

"Miserable child!" he cried, "do you believe that the souls of heretics enjoy, at the very first, that blessed ascension? Wretched, wretched creature, you will learn otherwise in purgatory!"—and he made a sign for the torch to be thrust into the pile.

"At least," interrupted Landino, "at least

confess the tender mercy of the holy church thou contemnest, who thus, by this charitable purgation of thy body, redeems thy soul from everlasting perdition; by these flames temporary, absolves thee from flames eternal."

"My parents," replied the lady very meekly, "were both Protestants; and it seems most becoming, at this last hour of my life, to continue in that faith whereunto they bred me. As for your flaming charity, I pray God that it may not be repaid to you in kind, at the great day of judgment;" with which answer she closed her eyes, and set herself stedfastly as if she would hear no more speeches.

The Confessor Landino, who heretofore had been unable to make any impression on her firmness, hereupon gave up all hope of prevailing over her quiet but constant spirit; but as for the Grand Inquisitor, he was quite beyond his patience. "Let her be burned!" he cried; which command was performed without delay.

At the first sharp pang of the cruel flames, a

sudden flush, as though of red-hot blood, mounted up into the marble cheeks of the unfortunate lady, and she drew her breath inwards with a very long shuddering sigh. The reflection of the increasing fire soon cast the same ruddy hue on the countenances of all the spectators, for the flames climbed with merciful rapidity up her loose feminine garments. Those who were nearest saw her head drop suddenly, as she choked upon her bosom; and then the cords burning through and through, the whole lifeless body tumbled forward into the embers, causing a considerable flutter of dust and smoke; and when it cleared away, there was nothing to be seen but a confused heap of ashes and dying embers.

Thus perished that lovely, unhappy English gentlewoman, in her prime of youth, far away from all that regarded her with love, and with few that looked on her with any degree of pity. And now the people were about to depart with mutual congratulations, when suddenly there

arose a great bustle towards the quarter of the Grand Inquisitor, and in a few moments the Countess Rovinello, in deep mourning, was seen kneeling at his feet. Her face was quite haggard and dreadful to look upon, and her dress so disordered as to make her seem like a maniac, but her gestures were still more frantic-like. Whatever her suit might be, the Inquisitor seemed much ruffled, and got up to depart; but she seized hold of his gown and detained him, whilst she continued to plead with great earnestness.

"You are too late!" he said, and withal he pointed his wand of office to the heap of black ashes that stood before him.

The Countess, letting go her hold, went and gazed for a minute on the cinders; then stooping down and gathering up a handful of the dust, she returned, and before he was aware, strewed some on the head of the Inquisitor, and the remainder upon her own.

" Let these ashes," she said, " be in token of our everlasting repentance."

After this awful ceremony,—neither of them without signs of remorse in their countenances, —they separated to console themselves as they might for their parts in this melancholy tragedy.

A TALE OF THE HAREM.

Imprison'd songster, my unhappy fate
Is, like thy own, disconsolate;
Thou art a prisoner, I a prisoner too,
Thou singest, and I sing.

SPANISH ROMANCES.

A Tale of the Harem.

Vol. 2.

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A TALE OF THE HAREM.

In the maritime warfare between the Genoese and the Turks, though the Mussulmen were worsted in nine battles out of ten, it happened sometimes that one or two galleys of our own were taken by the Infidels; and through one of these mishaps an Italian gentleman named Benetto, who was a singing-master, and on his passage to England, became a captive to the enemy. Being a very resolute man, he fought till there were more slashes in his clothes than had been fashioned by the tailor; but the crew being mastered by a superior force, the musician was put in chains on board of the Turkish ship. The latter having been

well mauled in the engagement, with many iron pellets sticking in her sides, and her tackling in a state of great disorder, made all the sail she could into port, where the captives were disposed of as slaves to the highest bidder.

Now it chanced luckily for Benetto, that he was purchased by an agent of the Sultan of Constantinople, and sent to work as an assistant in the gardens of the Seraglio; whereas others, being bought by avaricious people, underwent a variety of changes, passing from one master to another, but without any difference for the better in their condition. The fortunate Benetto, on the contrary, led an easy life enough, having only to tend upon the flowers and shrubs for the gratification of the ladies of the Harem; and what proved a great comfort to him was, that he had no mistress to mourn for in a distant country; so that though he sighed sometimes for liberty, he never gave himself up to despondency like the rest of the captives.

Thus he continued to dig, and water the

plants very contentedly, as though he had been born for that task, being a man of that happy cheerful disposition which can accommodate itself to any circumstances; and besides, the superintendent of the pleasure-grounds was of as pleasant a humour as himself, which tended very materially to his ease. And truly it was well that Benetto kept up a better heart than the captive Jews in Babylon; for he had by nature a melodious voice, improved by art to great perfection, the science of music having been his peculiar study; and oftentimes he beguiled himself after his day's work by singing over his most favourite airs.

The apartment of the ladies of the Harem stood, luckily, at such a convenient distance, that Benetto's voice found its way through the windows, which were sure to be left open every night, for the sake of the warbling of the nightingales that harboured amongst the trees. The discourse of the ladies turning one evening on the ravishing notes of that bird, and its

amours with the rose, there came a deep sigh from the bosom of one of the Sultanas, a Circassian, and she affirmed that there was a voice more enchanting than that which had been so much commended.

"As for the bird it belongs to," she said, "to judge from his tune, he must be of a most delicate figure and plumage; for though I cannot make out a single word, there seems a most passionate meaning in whatever he sings."

At this speech, one of the ladies burst into tears, and leaned down her beautiful face between her hands; for she was an Italian by birth, and remembered well the sweet languishing and love-breathing ditties of her native land; the rest of the women crowding about her at these symptoms of emotions, and inquiring the reason,——

"Alas!" she sobbed, "the songs that you hear come from no bird, but from a human voice, which belongs to some unfortunate cap-

tive from my own dear country beyond the sea. I wonder not that you found it so touching, for that kind of melody belongs naturally to our clime. The songs there are so full of love and tenderness, that the amorous rose, instead of merely opening her bosom as she does to the song of the bulbul, would put forth wings in place of leaves, to fly after the musician."

Nor did the fond lady speak beyond her feeling in this matter, so dearly does memory exaggerate the merits of things beloved. Anon the clear voice of Benetto sounded again upon the distant wind; and when it was silent, the mournful lady responded with a canzonet so exquisitely pathetic, that the listeners, though they did not comprehend even one syllable of the words, were melted instantly into tears. The singer herself, coming at last to a certain passage, which seemed to cause the very breaking of her heartstrings, was so overcome, that she could proceed no farther; but, with a throat

swelling with grief instead of harmony, cast herself upon a sofa, and gave way to an ecstasy of tears.

In the mean time Benetto, hearing the voice in the garden, had drawn near to the window, and recognized the song to be one of the compositions of Italy, which set his heart aching more seriously than ever since he had been a captive. However, he soon plucked up his spirits; and congratulating himself that there was one person at least in Constantinople to take part with him in a duett, he concerned himself only to contrive how to get admitted to the concert.

Accordingly, choosing the best of his pieces, he sang them in the garden every night with the tenderest expression, the ladies being always confined after dusk within the palace. At last, the Sultan happening to hear his music, had a mind to enjoy it nearer; so, sending a slave to fetch the gardener into an ante-chamber,

which was separated from that of the ladies only by a silken curtain, Benetto was commanded to sing some of his best songs. As he executed them in very excellent style, the Sultan, who had a good ear enough for an infidel, was exceedingly pleased with the performance. Commending the musician, therefore, in very gracious terms to Angelina, for that was the name of the Italian lady, she made bold to answer him as follows.

"Sire, I agree with your Majesty, that the slave has a sweet voice, and an agreeable style of singing; notwithstanding, there are several of the airs, and especially one piece, which, as far as I remember of the music, are capable of much tenderer expression. By your Majesty's leave, if I might hear that song once or twice over, I think I could remember the variations, which I think would afford your Majesty an increase of pleasure."

The Sultan, who was passionately fond of

her voice, immediately commanded Benetto to sing over again the last song, and which was an air capable of very melancholy cadences. Now Angelina was an improvisatrice, and could compose verses at pleasure, so when it came to her turn to sing, she set extempore words in Italian to the music, which spoke to the following effect:—

"Ah, Florence! fair Florence! city of my heart, shall I never behold thee again?

"There are marble walls between us, and gates of brass—but my thoughts go wandering up and down thy familiar streets!

"Methinks I see my beloved home, with the very flowers that I left growing upon the terrace!

"Methinks I see thee, gentle Arno, shining merrily in the sun!

"Alas! my tears wash out this dream, like the colours on a cloud full of rain.

"I look again; and behold, there is nothing left but my prison wall!"

When she had done singing, Benetto, taking the hint, replied in the same manner, but with less eloquence; telling her, in plain language, to keep up her heart, and that by God's help she should one day see Florence again. The concert being then ended, he was dismissed, with a piece of gold as a mark of the approbation of the Sultan.

The next day, when the superintendent of the pleasure-grounds was walking about the royal gardens, Benetto came up to him and asked for a saw, in order to cut down a certain noxious tree. The superintendent desiring to know which it was, Benetto pointed out a particular tree, with a number of horizontal branches growing very closely together, but the

Turk would by no means suffer it to be cut down. It was of so rare a kind, he said, that he did not know even its name; but Benetto, who had his wits about him, and knew that there was no other tree in the garden so likely for his purpose, did not give up the matter without another trial.

Accordingly, taking care never to bestow any water upon the plants within a certain distance of the tree, there being at the same time a long drought, they soon sickened and withered up; whereupon leading the superintendent to the spot, he pointed out this effect.

"This baneful tree," said he, "of the name of which you are so ignorant, is without question the deadly Upas of the island of Java, which is of so poisonous a quality, that it will not suffer any vegetable to grow under the shadow of its branches. Look how the herbs round it have all perished, as if they had been scorched up with fire; and, as I have read, the human life is quite as liable to be affected by its pernicious

atmosphere. Thus, if any of the ladies of the Harem should by chance fall asleep under it, I doubt it would be as fatal as the Tree of Knowledge to their grandmother. We might as well chew the deadly leaves, as that anything of this kind should happen; for our death would be as certain in one case as in the other. For my own part, though the least splinter of this cursed wood is mortal if it should enter into the flesh, I will cheerfully undertake the hazard of cutting down this dangerous trunk, rather than have such a dreadful responsibility hanging continually over my head."

The good-natured superintendent agreeing with the prudence of this recommendation, Benetto got permission to cut down the tree as fast as he would, which he did not fail to perform; and after lopping away all the branches on two sides of the stem, in the manner of an espalier, he set down the tree carelessly in a bye-corner of the garden.

The same evening Benetto was sent for as

before, to sing in the ante-chamber; and beginning with the same melancholy air, there came a voice suddenly through the silken screen, commanding him to desist.

"I have been thinking," said the Sultan, as he turned to Angelina, who was sitting beside him on a sofa in the inner room; "I have been thinking that I should like now to hear some lively tune: the songs I have heard hitherto, though very beautiful, were all of a melancholy cast; and I am curious to know whether the genius of your music will admit also of comical expression."

"I can assure your Highness," said the lady, "there is no country that can boast of such pretty little laughing canzonets as my own, for though we have borrowed many strains from the nightingale, we have others that warble as merrily as the carol of the morning lark.

"You make me impatient to hear one," replied the Sultan; whereupon an attendant was

sent to convey this command to Benetto, who immediately struck up a very lively tune; and, as he had good news to communicate, he sang with unbounded gaiety and spirit. The words ran thus :—

"Ladders there are none in this place, neither of ropes nor of wood !

"But I have a pretty tree, with many branches, that will stand upright against a wall !

"What if I should place it against a lady's prison, in the middle of the night ?

"Shall I see a vision, like Jacob, of a figure stepping down my ladder, who looks like an angel of light ?"

The lady, being overjoyed at these welcome tidings, sang with an equal glee, and made answer by the same tune in a similar way.

"O joy of joys!—To hear this grateful news, there seems now but a mile, paved with wishes, between Florence and me.

"I feel myself already, like a bird with wings, amongst those pleasant boughs!

"Step by step, as I descend, I pluck the sweet apples of liberty, which relish even as the fruits of my own dear land!"

It happened that the piece they had been singing had a pretty little burthen at the end for two voices; so that when the lady came to that part, Benetto joined in with the proper chorus of the song, to the great admiration of the Sultan, who ordered him a piece of gold on his dismissal, which seemed to make the captive defer his plot for another night.

On the following day, about noon, when the superintendent as usual came into the gardens, he was amazed to see Benetto working

at a parterre with an extraordinary kind of hoe, the handle of which, rudely fashioned and rough, could not be less than a dozen feet long. The jolly Turk, tucking his hands in his sash, fell to laughing immoderately at this whimsical sight, for Benetto wielded his implement with considerable awkwardness; at last, fetching his breath again, he inquired the reason of such an extraordinary appearance.

Benetto, without turning his head aside, answered very sedately, that it was the universal custom of his country to use hoes with handles of that length.

"Now God forgive me!" answered the Mussulman; "but you have made me long to travel, since there are such wonderful scenes to be enjoyed abroad:" and with that he fell into a fresh convulsion of laughter.

In the mean time Benetto continued his work with inflexible gravity, though the exertion he used to handle the hoe with dexterity made the sweat-drops start out like great beads

upon his forehead. At last, being fain to obtain a pause, he explained to the Turk, who had done laughing, that it was common in Italy to employ those long-handled hoes, in order to reach the weeds in the middle of a parterre without trampling amongst the plants.

"There is some reason in what you say," returned the superintendent; and taking the tool out of the hand of Benetto, he made aim at certain weeds in the middle of the bed; but at the very first stroke he mowed down a whole cluster of flowers.

Thereupon bursting into a fresh fit of mirth at his own clumsiness, the merry Turk thrust the wonderful hoe back again into the hand of the gardener, who resumed his labour with great earnestness; the Mussulman in the meanwhile walking away, but often turning his head over his shoulder to look back at Benetto, who, as soon as the old fellow had gone out of sight, laid down the ponderous hoe with very

great good will, and began to chuckle in his turn.

When the hour for music was come, he was summoned again to the antechamber, where he had the boldness, whilst he waited, to steal a peep through a crevice of the silken curtain, and discovered that his countrywoman was quite as beautiful a person as his fancy had suggested. He had taken care to compose some fresh words for the occasion, as well as to set them to another air, which he had not sung on any of the preceding nights: it had also a part for two voices, which the lady happened to know, and the Sultan was so delighted with the liveliness of the music, that he made them sing it to him several times over. At last, just as they were commencing the chorus for the fourth time, his face very suddenly altered, from the greatest pleasure to a look of gloom; and he turned his brows with such a frown upon the lady, that she stopped short in the middle of a note.

" How is this ?" said he : " I understand nothing of the language, but I can perceive that you sing different words to the music every time that it is repeated."

Angelina blushed and hung down her head at this abrupt question, for she could invent verses with far more facility than excuses. At last she told him, that it was usual in Italy to leave the words of such airy little songs to the fancy of the singers, and that, except when those happened to be persons of wit and genius, the verses were always composed of the most common-place expressions.

The Sultan listened to this explanation with a very grave look, and after meditating a while, spoke thus : " Madam, you must not take it ill of me, but hereafter I shall desire the Dragoman (or Interpreter) to partake with me in the delight of hearing you. He is as fond of music as I am, and will be able to satisfy me whether the poetry of what you sing is answerable, in sentiment, to the music.

The lady and Benetto both suspected, from these expressions, that the Sultan entertained some mistrust of them; and therefore, when they sang again, it was with some quaverings which did not belong to the composition. The Sultan at length signifying that he had heard enough, the singers desisted, and Benetto was dismissed, for this once, without any piece of gold, the Sultan intending secretly to reward him on the morrow with two hundred stripes of the bastinado.

As soon as Benetto found his opportunity, he repaired therefore to the garden, convinced that it was time to put his design into execution. The skies fortunately were full of clouds, making the night very obscure, except at some intervals, when the moon broke through the vapours; so that he set about his work in the gloom with the greater confidence. Having learned at least the art of transplanting during his service in the gardens, his first step

was to convey the tree, which has been already mentioned, towards the apartment of Angelina.

Now, her chamber opened upon a long gallery or balcony on the outside of the harem, against which Benetto rested the tree as securely as he could: nor was this an easy performance, for it was as heavy as he could well carry, so that his joints even cracked beneath the weight. After resting awhile to regain his breath, he began to mount up his extempore ladder; and as the branches were very close together, the ascent was quite an easy affair. Thus, he was able to look in at the lady's window in a very few seconds; but, alas! though he had not wasted a minute that could be saved, he was already too late, as will presently appear.

It is a barbarous custom with the Turks, when they conceive any jealousy or disgust of their mistresses, to tie them up in sacks and cast them into the water; the sea, which is the object

of marriage with the Venetian Doges, being to the Ottoman Sultans the instrument of divorce. As soon, then, as Benetto looked in at the window, his eyes were shocked by the sight of three black savage-looking slaves, who were preparing for this cruel ceremony, the victim being no other than his own unfortunate countrywoman. Her mouth having been gagged beforehand, she could not utter any cries; but with her hands she made the most piteous supplications to the cruel Moors, two of whom held the mouth of the gaping sack wide open, whilst the other with his rude profane hands endeavoured by force to bind her delicate limbs.

The terrified Benetto, who comprehended this scene at the first peep, felt such a shock as a sleeper who oversteps a precipice in his dream. A sudden swimming in his head made him ready to tumble off the tree; but luckily his body was leaning against the rail-work of the gallery, so that he could not fall: in the meantime he was quite exposed to view from the window, but

the blacks were so thoroughly employed, thatthey had not time to cast a look that way. After a minute or two, resuming his presence of mind, he bent down his body so as to be concealed behind the gallery, and in this uneasy posture deliberated within himself how he ought to proceed. His first impulse was to rush in upon the ruffianly slaves; but recollecting that he had no weapon, and that such an assault could but delay the fate of the lady for a few moments, he resolved on a more prudent course.

Taking down his ladder, therefore, which now seemed twice as burthensome as before, and his heart a great deal heavier, he set up the tree against the wall of the garden, on the side next the water, whose murmurings through the stillness of the night he could sufficiently distinguish.

It took him but a few moments to clamber to the top of the wall, by the help of the friendly tree; which, however, was too cumbersome to be dragged up after him in order to effect a

descent on the other side. In nine cases out of ten, this would have been the natural oversight of a man intent upon the first step of his escape; whereas the ingenious Benetto had foreseen and provided against this difficulty. In a few minutes, therefore, he was safely landed on the other side; and, without doubt, the superintendent, who ridiculed the gardener's long hoe, would have changed his tone to see it hanging on the outer part of the wall, for the accommodation of Benetto; for by this means he let himself down with ease, the handle reaching within a few yards of the ground.

And now the moon, breaking away through a sullen cloud, behind the chinks of which she had sometimes just glimmered like a bright fish entangled in a net, began to touch every object as with a silver wand: Benetto found it necessary, therefore, to shelter himself, like a man who shunned his own shadow, by going into the obscurest places, creeping on in this manner from tree to tree and from wall to wall,

till he reached the water-side: but in what direction he should next proceed, in order to intercept the lady, was a question that got no better answer than those which are addressed to the echo.

Whilst he was thus wandering, the three black slaves, having tied up the unfortunate lady in the sack, proceeded with their burthen, as they were directed, towards a lonely place on the banks of the Bosphorus, in order to bestow her in her last bath with the greater privacy. Now it happened, through the goodness of God, that there was an English ship of war then lying off at anchor, having brought over an ambassador to the Sublime Porte; and some of the sailors and junior officers, desiring a frolic, had put off secretly in the ship's boat, and landed about the same spot.

These jovial men wandering about the shore, it fell out that they encountered with the blacks; and being minded to joke with them, some of the sailors enquired by signs what they carried

in that poke. The slaves, not caring to disclose the truth, made answer that it was some rotten wheat which they were going to cast into the sea; and with that, they endeavoured to get away, not caring to have to do with drunkards, for the mariners rolled about a good deal, as they are apt to do on the dry land. Now the lady, who, though gagged, had yet the use of her ears, had overheard the question of the sailors; and whilst the slaves were answering, she began to wriggle herself about in the sack as violently as she could. The sailor who stood nearest, observing this motion, did not fail to notice it to his comrades, and they became speedily as curious as himself to ascertain what it was that struggled so in the sack. The blacks however, who relished them very little, still endeavoured to break away, whereas the strangers were equally bent upon their own satisfaction, so that the parties came in a little while to blows. The sturdy seamen prevailing, and getting possession of the sack, they

soon discovered, with great indignation, the nature of its contents; whereupon the cowardly blacks, not waiting for the buffets which they were certain to receive, took instantly to their heels, and were out of sight in a minute.

The English sailors, who can melt upon a proper occasion as readily as their own pitch and tar, were infinitely concerned at the condition of the poor lady; wherefore, after releasing her limbs, as well as her tongue, which was not backward in thanks to her deliverers, they rowed back with all diligence to the ship, where Angelina was treated with every kind of tenderness and attention.

The discomfited blacks in the interim had got under the shadow of a high wall, where they sat down to take breath; and after weeping together for a while, they all opened their mouths at once with the same question, to ask what was to be done.

"For my part," said one, "I am not weeping thus merely because the lady has escaped, for

we could easily devise a lie together and declare that the job was done. But, alas! I know that the chief of the eunuchs, old Abdalla, is so careful, that he will be waiting for us at the ducking place, to see with his own eyes that she is thrown in."

The slaves, knowing this to be the most likely case, began to shed tears again, and howled in a low tone very dismally, for they felt that their heads were only fastened by a pack-thread to their shoulders. At last, Mezrou, who was the eldest, spoke as follows:—

"Our case," said he, "is indeed critical—so that my neck smarts already to think of the result. On the one hand, if we tell any lie, there is that accursed old chief of the eunuchs to detect us; and on the other, if we confess the simple truth, our heads will still fly off, because we did not fight with those sea-devils to the last extremity. I see therefore but one way to escape out of this scrape, which is, by putting some trick upon Abdalla. And now

I think of it, there is a certain Frank lives hereabouts, who keeps a great sow pig in his back-yard; and at the next house there is a baker, where we may obtain a sack. Now, if the swine were tied up fitly, and her head well muffled in my sash, so as to keep her from either grunting or squealing, I think the deception might pass; but it must be dispatched very quickly."

The other slaves thinking favourably of this scheme, they ran off together to the house of the baker, who was in bed; but they obliged him to get up and give them an empty flour sack; after which, going to the pigsty of the Frank, they secured his sow in the sack, with a little difficulty. Then taking up the burthen between them, which was full as lively as the other had been, they trotted gaily down to the water-side, where they soon perceived some person pacing to and fro, whom they took at the first glance for Abdalla. Going straight up to him therefore, without any mistrust, they

all called out together, that they had brought the lady to be drowned, which was agreeable news enough to the man, for in truth it was no other than Benetto, who had been wandering up and down the shore, in the greatest uncertainty and despair.

The words, then, had no sooner got clear of the thick foolish lips of the blacks, than the musician began to deal about him so roundly, that the foremost was laid sprawling in a twinkling upon the earth. The other two, at this sight, foreseeing that they should have use for all the hands they had, immediately pitched down the sack with very little ceremony; and any one may conceive how this action increased the fury of Benetto.

The battered swine resenting the outrage as much, and feeling herself more at liberty, began at the same moment to struggle vehemently within the sack, so that she partly released her nostrils from the sash, and began to call out with all her brutal breath for liberty.

Thus the rage of Benetto, whenever he began to faint, was roused up again by these half-stifled cries; which, struggling partly through the canvass and the linen, were equivocal enough to be mistaken for the voice of Angelina, even by the ear of a musician. These excitements lending him treble courage and vigour, he was quite a match for the three slaves together, notwithstanding they fought lustily; and doubtless something tragical would have ensued but for the thriftiness of the baker.

This careful man, grudging to lend a new sack to strangers, had picked out an old one, the canvass of which was very rotten and full of patches; so that as Benetto glanced his eyes every now and then towards the sack, to give himself fresh encouragement, on a sudden the cloth ripped up with a smart report, and the huge sow, jumping briskly out, went cantering off homewards, with the sash round her head, and grunting all the way to denote her satisfaction.

The blacks, through this accident, having nothing to contend for, gave over the contest; and after a little grinning scampered away after the pig, to make up what story they could to the chief of the eunuchs.

As for Benetto, he stood as if rooted to the spot, and stared on the remains of the sack like one who had just witnessed some great stroke of enchantment. No sight, in truth, could have caused him such an astonishment, unless, indeed, the spectacle of a sow turning before his eyes into a lady, for he had made certain of Angelina being within the sack, even to the seeing of her, in fancy, through her veil of canvass. At last, coming to his senses, and catching sight of the English vessel, his thoughts began to turn upon his own safety; and stripping off his jacket and turban, he began to swim towards the ship, though with great difficulty, on account of his bruises.

It would not be easy to describe his transports, when he came on board and discovered

Angelina: wherefore, let that topic be left untouched, as well as the mirth which prevailed at the relation of his adventures. The ship setting sail immediately for England, after a prosperous passage the two happy Italians disembarked at London, where Benetto, by his skill in music and excellent singing, acquired an immense fortune in a very few years. In the meantime he espoused Angelina, and finally returned with her to Florence, where they lived for many years in great happiness and very merrily; for neither of them could ever smell pork, or pass by a hogsty, without an inclination to laughter.

As for the three black slaves, they wore their heads some years longer than they expected; the lie they made up being credited by Abdalla, the chief of the eunuchs, who had never stirred out from the palace. The superintendent of the pleasure-grounds was however more unlucky, for he suffered some hundred stripes of the bastinado on the soles of his feet,

for allowing the innovations of Benetto. In consequence, there are no more upas-trees to be found in the royal gardens; and the slaves labour, even unto this very day, with hoes that are but a yard long in the handle.

THE CHESTNUT TREE.

Like a demigod here sit I in the sky,
And wretched fools' secrets heedfully o'er-eye.

LOVE'S LABOUR LOST.

THE CHESTNUT TREE.

It is a deplorable custom with spendthrifts, when their purses are empty, to replenish them at the cost of the dryads, often cutting down the very trees that have sheltered the most venerable of their ancestors, as well as the timber which wants many years of its proper growth, according to the pressure of their wants. Many foolish persons, again, under false pretences of taste, will root up the sheltering woods and copses, that made comfortable fences against the inclement wind, thus letting in the unmitigated tempest to rage against their bleak naked mansions; both parties being equally

mischievous in their way. There are other persons, however, who cut down their oaks, and chestnuts, for much better reasons, as you shall presently hear.

A certain Hidalgo was walking in a lonely plain, in the neighbourhood of Granada, when he was suddenly attacked by a small wild Spanish bull. The spiteful creature, with red sparkling eyes, and a body as black as any coal, made a run at the gentleman so nimbly, that he had barely time to save himself by climbing up a large chestnut-tree; whereupon the wicked beast began to toss about the loose earth with great fury, instead of the human clay he had intended to trifle with.

There is no such creature in the world as your bull for a revengeful memory, for he will cherish affronts or dislikes for a considerable while; and besides, he takes great pleasure in any premeditated mischief, which he will pursue with a vast deal of patience. Thus, whenever the Hidalgo set his foot upon the ground, the

wily animal, who had kept at a convenient distance, immediately ran at him again, so that he was forced to betake himself to the tree with the utmost alacrity. Then the bull would stray farther off, still keeping a wary eye towards the tree; but feeding in the meantime so quietly, that every thought of malice seemed to have quite gone out of his round roguish head; whereas he was ready at a twinkling for a fresh career, his perseverance excelling that of grimalkin, when she sits watching at a mouse's street-door.

The impatient Hidalgo, weary at heart of this game, where all his moves tended to no purpose, at last gave up the point, and removed higher up in the tree, in order to amuse himself with the surrounding prospect, which was now enlivened by the oblique rays of the declining sun. I will wait, said he, till night makes a diversion in my favour, and, like the matadore, hangs her cloak on this wild devil's horns; so turning himself about, from side

to side, he began to contemplate the various objects in the distance.

Whilst he was thus occupied, with his eyes turned towards the East, there came two men on foot from the opposite quarter, who, passing beyond the tree, approached the browzing bull without any kind of mistrust. The dissembling creature allowed them to come pretty near, without any suspicion; and then suddenly charging at the two men, they were obliged to run to the tree as the only shelter, and with great difficulty clambered out of reach of his mischievous horns. The animal, being thus foiled for the second time, revenged himself on the hat of one of the travellers, which had been dropped in the race, and then began to feed again at the usual distance.

The two pedlars, for so they seemed, made several attempts, like the Hidalgo, to get away, but the bull still intercepted them in the same manner; so that at last they were fain to dispose themselves as comfortably as they could

on a lower branch, and await the pleasure of the animal, to proceed on their way. The Hidalgo being a shy, reserved man by nature, as well as very haughty on account of his nation and his birth, did not choose to make any advances towards his fellow-lodgers in the tree, who by their dress were people of the common sort. The two men, on their part, knew nothing of a third person being perched above their heads; wherefore, to pass away the time, they began to talk over their affairs together, with as much confidence as if they had been sitting in the middle of the great Arabian Desert.

At first the Hidalgo, being much occupied by his own reflections, did not listen very attentively to their discourse; besides, he had a great contempt for the conversation of such vulgar persons, which would have prevailed over any common curiosity; however, as some sentences reached him against his will, he happened to overhear a name passing between them that made him prick up his ears.

"I am afraid, Gines Spinello," said one of the voices, "that this cursed creature will spoil our sport for to-night."

Now it was no wonder that the gentleman became so much interested in their conversation, for the fellow just mentioned was a notorious robber, and the terror of the whole province. The Hidalgo, therefore, felt a natural curiosity to behold so remarkable a character; and peeping down very cautiously between the leaves, he saw the two men sitting astride, with their faces towards each other, on the lowermost bough. They were so much below him, that he could not judge of their physiognomies; but of course the very hair of their heads seemed, to his fancy, to partake of a very ruffianly expression.

"As for that matter," returned Spinello, "our job to-night is a trifling one that may be dispatched in two hours. What frets me more is to be obliged to sit thus, cock-horse, upon a cursed branch; for I have always a misgiving at

getting up into a tree, since nothing has proved so fatal to several of our gang."

The other, laughing heartily at these expressions, which he supposed to allude to the gallows, Gines interrupted him in a very grave tone.

"I mean no such matter," said he, "as you conclude. The gibbet indeed has made an end of some of us; but the trees I mean, were as much growing and flourishing as this. It was a chestnut too, that cost so dear to poor Lazarillo; wherefore, I would rather that this tree had been a cypress, or a yew even, or of some other kind."

"For my part, chestnut or not," said the other, "I feel myself much beholden to this good plant: notwithstanding, I should like to hear what happened to Lazarillo, and the others of the gang."

The Hidalgo by this time was quite as much interested in the mishap of Lazarillo: so laying himself along the bough, and grasping it with

both his arms, he stooped his head sideways as low as he could, to listen to the story that Gines was going to relate.

" You are aware," said Spinello, " that when we have no affair of moment upon our hands, which requires us to go in company, it is usual for some of the cleverest amongst us to go abroad singly, on little adventures of their own. Thus it befel Lazarillo to take it in his head to pay a visit to a certain Hidalgo, who resides not a long way from this spot. There was a clump of chestnut trees in front of the house, all of them of wonderful bulk, having stood there a great many years, and it was the season when they were in full leaf. Lazarillo, coming a little too soon, and seeing a great many lights in the windows, clambered up into the greatest of these trees, which stood nearest to the house, in order to hide himself till dark, as well as to observe what was going on within the house. The boughs being very broad and smooth, he found his nest comfortable enough; and, besides, he was

very well diverted to watch the motions of the servants, for some of the branches grew against the chamber windows, so that he could even see how the people bestowed the plate and valuables against the night. Whilst he was amusing himself in this way, the Hidalgo, who had been out sporting, came homewards with his fowling-piece in his hand; when just at this nick there flew up some large kind of bird, and made off directly for the tree."

"Well, wherefore do you stop?" asked the other rogue very eagerly, for at these words Gines had made a tolerable long pause.

"I was thinking," said Gines, "that I heard a rustling overhead; but it was only some breeze amongst the leaves. I suppose the Hidalgo was willing to discharge his gun before he entered the house, for it was loaded with very large shot, which are never used to kill birds with; however, he fired after the fowl into the very middle of the leaves, and the devil guiding the lead, some of it went into the

body of poor Lazarillo, who tumbled in a trice to the ground. If the shot had not killed him, the fall would have broken his neck, so that he was stone-dead upon the spot: however, to make sure of that matter, our governors made a point of hanging him afterwards upon another tree."

Herewith Gines vented a thousand horrible imprecations against the unfortunate sportsman; who had the evil luck to be sitting at that very moment above his head. The unhappy Hidalgo, though he was miserably terrified, dared not even to quake—the least motion causing a rustling amongst the leaves, or a creaking of the bough; and getting cramped, as any one must, to ride so long on a wooden chestnut horse, without a saddle, yet he could not venture to stretch a limb to relieve himself. In the mean time, fear caused such a boiling noise in his ears, as if of the devil's cauldron at a gallop, that he could not make out the history of the other robbers who had perished by means of

the trees. The two rogues, on the contrary, finding themselves very much at their ease, continued to gossip together with great coolness, though the bull had now removed to a considerable distance. The Hidalgo, at last, resuming the use of his faculties, overheard as follows:—

"As for the chestnut trees," said Gines, "you will see the stumps of them to-night, for the Hidalgo did not choose to leave a perch for any more such birds so near his house. But there are other ways to know what goes on within, as well as by looking through the windows; and we shall soon see whether the people of this random shooter are more properly his servants or my own."

At this insinuation, the wretched person who sat aloft could not help uttering a half-stifled groan, which would have infallibly betrayed him, if it had not passed for the grumbling of the bull. Notwithstanding, he had to endure still worse tidings; to conceive which, suppose

Gines to describe the abominable plot he had laid for the murder of the Hidalgo—two of his servants being in the pay of the banditti, and engaged to admit them in the middle of the night. The rogues did not omit, moreover, to dispose of the two daughters of the unfortunate gentleman overhead; and as their inclinations pointed differently, the one choosing the youngest, and the other the elder lady for a mistress, they soon came to an amicable understanding on this part of the design. Thus the Hidalgo, who had always intended to match his children as he would, without question even of the girls themselves, was obliged to hear them disposed of beforehand, and without having any voice whatever in the affair.

The encroaching dusk closing round, in the meantime, till the horizon was confined within a very narrow circle, the two villains at last dismounted from the bough, and proceeded on their way without any interruption from the bull, who was now scarcely visible, amid the

distant shadows. As soon as the rogues were out of sight, the Hidalgo scrambled down the trunk, to the infinite relief of his limbs, which from long confinement to the same posture had grown as rigid and almost as crooked as the boughs they had embraced: however, the thought of what was to take place at home soon enforced a suppleness in his joints, and he departed with a brisk shuffling pace, from what had been to him such a very bitter tree of knowledge.

The dreadful fear which had lately possessed his bosom, turning, now that he was in safety, to the most revengeful feelings, he vowed as he went along, that Gines and his gang should suffer in retaliation by the most exquisite torments. In this furious mood, with clenched hands and teeth, and terrible emphatic steps, he entered his own house, and repaired straight into the apartment of his daughters; who, seeing the flaming beacons of wrath in his countenance, were ready to swoon with dismay. It alarmed

them the more, that they had not expected him to return for the night, and being ignorant of the true occasion, they were led, by certain misgivings of their own hearts, to impute his anger to a very different cause, wherefore coming together with clasped hands, to kneel down at his feet, they besought him with many tears to be moe calm and temperate.

At another time, this strange conduct would have astounded the Hidalgo, whereas, having other concerns in his mind, he did not stop to sift out the mystery, but, in as few words as he could, explained the danger that was hanging over their heads: The two terrified maidens, at this horrible report, instantly forgot all other fears, for the mere words conjured up the figures of the banditti upon the vacant air; but when the Hidalgo came to speak of the design of the robber and his comrade, how they were to make mistresses of the two ladies, they sent up together, as if from one throat, a shrill involuntary scream. Anon, running hastily to

different closets, for the greater danger always swallows up the less in this manner, they dragged forward a brace of young comely gallants, who, on their part, seemed ready enough to protect them from Gines and his associates.

The two champions, as well as the Hidalgo, were somewhat disconcerted by his abrupt introduction to each other, and the pale lily of fear that had blown on the cheeks of the damsels, was burned up by a deep crimson blush. At last one of the cavaliers, addressing himself to the Hidalgo, began to speak for both after this manner :—

" Sir, I know that you cannot behold us with any welcome; and yet, for my own part, I am heartily thankful that we are here. Notwithstanding the ungracious method of our introduction, we beg so much favour of you, as to be considered gentlemen for the present, and respecters of good manners; who desire nothing better than to make amends, by our timely ser-

vices, for an untimely intrusion. By your good leave, therefore, we will help to defend these ladies against the robbers,—and as we are men of honour, it shall be left to your own discretion, whether you will bestow them upon us hereafter."

As the young gentleman spoke this with an air of great modesty and sincerity, the Hidalgo thought fit to accept of the assistance that was offered; whereupon they began to consult together on the steps which should be adopted in such an extremity. Accordingly, it was concerted to send for the two traitorous servants, one by one, into the chamber, where, as soon as they entered, they were seized, and bound hand and foot before they could think of any resistance. The wretched men, finding themselves in this dreary plight, and that their lives were at command, began readily to confess all they knew of the plot; adding several particulars which had not been touched upon by Spinello. Amongst other news, it came out

that the banditti had deposited their arms in readiness in a certain hollow oak, which stood in the rear of the house; whereupon the Hidalgo made a vow, inwardly, to cut down that dangerous tree, as he had done before by the chestnuts.

It was towards midnight, when Spinello, with his comrades, approached for the execution of their design. The night was very boisterous, with frequent gusts of wind, that drove the low black clouds with great rapidity across the sky. Thus every now and then there was a short bright glance of the moon, followed, at a few minutes interval, by the most profound shadows; and, by the help of those snatches of light, the desperate Gines led on his fellows, who were about half a dozen in all, towards the hollow tree.

Now it happened, just as he came up, that a fresh cloud came over the face of the moon, so that the mark he aimed at was quite swallowed up in the gloom. Groping his way,

therefore, with his hands, he began to feel about the ragged stem for the entry to the magazine; but he had no sooner thrust his arms into the opening, than they were seized by some person who was concealed within the hollow trunk.

I know not whether Gines recalled, at this moment, his superstition about a tree, but he set up a loud yell of dismay. The Hidalgo, who lay close by in ambush, with his party, instantly discharged a well-aimed volley at the rest of the banditti, who finding themselves betrayed, and without arms, took at once to their heels, leaving two that were miserably wounded, upon the grass. By this time, Spinello, recovering his courage, made a desperate struggle to get away; but, before he could disengage his arms, the Hidalgo came up with his assistants, and the robber was quickly overcome and secured. Of the other two men, one was already dead, the bullet having lodged in his breast: as for the second, his leg-bone was broken by

a ball just above the ankle joint, and it happened that this was the very same rogue who had gossipped with Gines upon the chestnut-bough.

It was a dreadful sight to behold the countenance of the latter, when he was dragged into the chamber, and how he foamed and gnashed his teeth at the two desponding varlets, who had been double traitors, he supposed, to both masters. Although he was so securely bound, those wretched men could not look upon him without an extreme trembling; however, when he was informed of the true cause of the discovery, he raved no more, remarking only, to the other robber, that his misgiving about the chestnut tree had been justified by the event.

The Hidalgo repairing afterwards, with the two young gentlemen, into the presence of his two daughters, there ensued many compliments between them, and joyful congratulations on the conclusion of the danger. At last, the Hidalgo growing more and more pleased with

the graceful manners and conversation of his guests, his heart warmed towards them, and he began to wish that they were all but his sons.

"Gentlemen," he said, "a late welcome is better than none at all, and especially when it comes maturely from the heart. Pray accept of this apology for my tardiness, and for your great services I will try to make amends to you on the spot. Your gallantry and agreeable bearing persuade me that you are truly the honourable young persons that you have named to me; and I rejoice, therefore, for my own sake as well as yours, that my daughters remain at my disposal. If you are willing then, to accept of each other, I foresee no difficulties—that is to say, provided you can both agree in your election, as readily as my other two robbers."

It would be hard to declare whether the two ladies were most happy or confused by this unexpected proposal; they therefore made off, with fewer words than blushes, to their own

bedchamber; but the three gentlemen sat up together, for security, during the remainder of the night.

On the morrow the criminals were delivered to the proper authorities, and the process with such atrocious offenders being very summary, they were executed, before sunset, in divers places about the province. For the most part, they were suspended on lofty wooden gibbets; but the body of Spinello, in order to make the greater impression, was hung up on the very same Chestnut Tree that had led to his defeat.

THE

FAIR MAID OF LUDGATE.

O, she is sweeter than the rose
  Now bathed among the balmly rain ;
And I maun gang to yon town,
  And see the lovesome maid again.

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

THE

FAIR MAID OF LUDGATE.

The reign of King Charles the Second of England was marked by two great public calamities: the first of them, that memorable Plague which devastated London; and then followed that deplorable Fire which destroyed such a large portion of the same devoted metropolis.

It happened shortly before the pestilence, that the King had a design to serve in the city; wherefore he rode that way on horseback, attended only by the Lord Rochester, and one or two gentlemen of the Court. As they were riding gently, in this manner, up the

hill of Ludgate, towards St. Paul's, the Earl observed that the King stopped short, and fixed his eyes on a certain casement on the right hand side of the way. The gentlemen, turning their heads in the same direction, immediately beheld a young and beautiful woman, in a very rich and fanciful dress, and worthy indeed of the admiration of the monarch; who, with sheer delight, stood as if rooted to the spot. The lady, for a while, did not observe this stoppage, so that the company of courtiers had full time to observe her countenance and dress. She wore upon her head a small cap of black velvet, which fitted very close, and came down with a point upon her forehead, where, at the peak of the velvet, there hung a very large pearl. Her hair, which was of an auburn colour and very abundant, fell down on either side of her face in large ringlets according to the fashion of the time, and clustered daintily about her fair neck and bosom, several of the locks, more-

over, being bound together here and there by clusters of fine pearls. As for her boddice, it was of white silk, with a goodly brooch of emeralds in the shape of strawberry leaves, which were held together by stalks of gold. Her sleeves, which were very wide, and hung loose from the elbow, were of the same silk; but there was a short under-sleeve of peach-blossom satin, that fastened with clasps of emerald about the mid-arm. Her bracelets were ornamented with the same gem; but the bands were of gold, as well as the girdle that encircled her waist. Thus much the company could perceive, as she leaned upon the edge of the window with one delicate hand: at last—for in the mean while she had been stedfastly looking abroad, as in a reverie—she recollected herself, and, observing that she was gazed at, immediately withdrew.

The King watched a minute or two at the window, after she was gone, like a man in a dream; and then, turning round to Rochester,

inquired if he knew any thing of the lady he had seen. The Earl replied instantly, that he knew nothing of her, except she was the loveliest creature that had ever feasted his eyes; whereupon the King commanded him to remain behind, and learn as many particulars as he could. The King, with the gentlemen, then rode on very thoughtfully into the city, where he transacted what he had to do, and then returned with the same company by Cheapside, where they encountered the Earl.

As soon as the King saw Rochester, he asked eagerly, "What news?" Whereupon the latter acquainted him with all he knew. "As for her name," he said, "she is called Alice, but her surname is swallowed up in that of The Fair Maid of Ludgate—for that is her only title in these parts. She is an only child, and her father is a rich jeweller; and so in faith was her mother likewise, to judge by this splendid sample of their workmanship."

"Verily I think so too," returned the Mo-

narch ; " she must come to Court," and with that they began to concert together how to prosecute that design.

And doubtless the Fair Maid of Ludgate would have been ensnared by the devices of that profligate courtier, but for an event that turned all thoughts of intrigue and human pleasure into utter despondency and affright. For now broke out that dreadful pestilence which soon raged so awfully throughout the great city, the mortality increasing from hundreds to thousands of deaths in a single week. At the first ravages of the infection, a vast number of families deserted their houses, and fled into the country ; the remainder enclosing themselves as rigidly within their own dwellings, as if they had been separately besieged by some invisible foe. In the mean time, the pestilence increased in fury, spreading from house to house, and from street to street, till whole parishes were subjected to its rage. At this point, the father of Alice fell sud-

denly ill, though not of the pest; however, the terrified domestics could not be persuaded otherwise, than that he was smitten by the plague, and accordingly they all ran off together, leaving him to the sole care of his afflicted child.

On the morning after this desertion, as she sate weeping at the bedside of her father, the Fair Maid heard a great noise of voices in the street; wherefore, looking forth at the front casement, she saw a number of youths, with horses ready saddled and bridled, standing about the door. As soon as she showed herself at the window they all began to call out together, beseeching her to come down, and fly with them from the city of death; which touched the heart of Alice very much: after thanking them, therefore, with her eyes full of tears, she pointed inwards, and told them that her father was unable to rise from his bed.

"Then there is no help for him," cried Hugh Percy. "God receive his soul! The plague is

striding hither very fast. I have seen the red crosses in Cheapside. Pray come down, therefore, unto us, dearest Alice, for we will wait on you to the ends of the earth."

The sorrowful Alice wept abundantly at this speech, and it was some minutes before she could make any answer.

"Hugh Percy," she said at last, "if it be as you say, the will of God be done; but I will never depart from the help of my dear father;" and with that, waiving her hand to them as a last farewell, she closed the casement, and returned to the sick-chamber.

On the morrow the gentle youths came again to the house on the same errand, but they were fewer than before. They moved Alice by their outcries to come at last to the window, who replied in the same way to their entreaties, notwithstanding the fond youths continued to use their arguments, with many prayers to her, to come down, but she remained constant in her denial; at length, missing some of the num-

ber, she inquired for Hugh Percy, and they answered dejectedly, that he had sickened of the plague that very morn.

"Alas! gentle kind friends," she cried, "let this be your warning, and depart hence in good time. It will make me miserable for ever to be answerable for your mischances; as for myself, I am resigned entirely to the dispensation of God." And with these words she closed the window, and the melancholy youths went away slowly, except one, who had neither brought any horse with him, nor joined in the supplications of the rest. The disconsolate Alice, coming afterwards to the window for air, beheld him thus standing with his arms folded against the door.

"How is this, Ralph Seaton, that you still linger about this melancholy place?"

"Gentle Alice," returned Seaton, "I have not come hither like the others, to bid you fly away from hence; neither must you bid me depart against my will."

"Ralph Seaton, my heart is brim-full of thanks to you for this tenderness towards me; but you have a mother and sister for your care."

"They are safe, Alice, and far from this horrible place."

"Would to God you were with them! dear Ralph Seaton, begone; and the love you bear towards me set only at a distance in your prayers. I wish you a thousand farewells, in one word—but pray begone." And with that, turning away, with one hand over her eyes, she closed the casement with the other, as if for ever and ever.

The next morning the young men came for the third time to the house, and there was a red cross but a few doors off. The youths were now but three or four in number, several having betaken themselves to the country in despair, and others had been breathed upon by the life-wasting pestilence. It was a long while before Alice came to the window, so that their hearts began to sink with dread, for they made

sure that she was taken ill. However, she came forth to them at last, in extreme distress, to see them so wilful for her sake.

"For the dear love of God!" she cried, "do not come thus any more, unless you would break my heart! Lo! the dreadful signal of death is at hand, and to-morrow it may be set upon this very door. Do not cause the curses of your friends and parents to be heaped hereafter on my miserable head. If you have any pity for me in your hearts, pray let this be the uttermost farewell between us."

At these words, the sad youths began to shed tears; and some of them, with a broken voice, begged of her to bestow on them some tokens for a remembrance. Thereupon she went for her bracelets, and after kissing them, gave them between two of the young men. To a third she cast her glove, but to Seaton she dropped a ring, which she had pressed sundry times to her lips.

The day after the final departure of the young men, the ominous red cross was marked on the jeweller's door; for, as he was known to be ill, it was supposed, of course, that his malady was the plague. In consequence the door was rigorously nailed up, so that no one could pass in or out, and moreover there were watchmen appointed for the same purpose of blockade. It was the duty of these attendants to see that the people within the suspected houses were duly supplied with provision; whereas, by the negligence of these hard-hearted men, it happened frequently that the persons confined within perished of absolute want. Thus it befel, after some days, that Alice saw her father relapsing again, for the lack of mere necessaries to support him in his weakness, his disorder having considerably abated. In this extremity, seeing a solitary man in the street, she stretched out her arms towards him, and besought him for the love of God to bring a little food;

but the bewildered man, instead of understanding, bade her "flee from the wrath to come," and with sundry leaps and frantic gestures, went capering on his way.

Her heart at this disappointment was ready to burst with despair; but, turning her eyes towards the opposite side, she perceived another man coming down the street, with a pitcher and a small loaf. As soon as he came under the window, she made the same prayer to him as to the former, begging him for charity, and the sake of her dear father, to allow him but a sup of the water and a small morsel of the bread.

"It is for that purpose," said the other, "that I am come." And as he looked upward she discovered that it was Seaton, who had brought this very timely supply. "You may eat and drink of these," he continued, "without any suspicion, for they come from a place many miles hence, where the infection is yet unknown."

The heart of Alice was too full to let her reply, but she ran forthwith, and fetched a

cord, to draw up the loaf and the pitcher withal, the last being filled with good wine. When her father had finished his repast, which revived him very much, she returned with the pitcher, and let it down by the cord to Seaton, who perceived something glittering within the vessel.

"Ralph Seaton," she said, "wear that jewel for my sake. The blessing of God be ever with you in return for this precious deed! but I conjure you, by the Holy Trinity, do not come hither again."

The generous Seaton, with great joy placed the brooch within his bosom, and with a signal of farewell to Alice, departed without another word. And now her heart began to sink again to think of the morrow, when assuredly her beloved parent would be reduced to the like extremity; for during all this time the negligent watchmen had never come within sight of the house. All the night hours she spent, therefore, in anguish and dread, which were still

more aggravated by the dismal rumbling of the carts, that at midnight were used to come about for the corpses of the dead.

In the middle of the night one of these coarse slovenly hearses, with a cargo of dead bodies, passed through the street, attended by a bell-man and some porters, with flaming torches, unto whom the miserable Alice called out with a lamentable voice. The men, at her summons, came under the window with the cart, expecting some dead body to be cast out to them, the mortality admitting of no more decent rites; but when they heard what she wanted, they replied sullenly, that they had business enough of their own to convey away all the carrion,—and so passed on with their horrible chimes.

The morning was spent in the same alternations of fruitless hope and despair,—till towards noon, when Seaton came again with the pitcher and a small basket, which contained some cold baked meat, and other eatables, that he had procured with infinite pains from a

country place, at a considerable distance. The fair maiden drew up these supplies with great eagerness, her father beginning now to have that appetite which is one of the first symptoms of recovery from any sickness; accordingly he fed upon the victuals with great relish. The gentle Alice, in the meanwhile, lowered down the empty basket and the pitcher to Seaton, and then again besought him not to expose himself to such risks by coming into the city; to which he made no answer but by pressing his hands against his bosom, as if to express that such errands gratified his heart; whereupon she made fresh signs to say farewell, and he departed.

In this manner several weeks passed away, the gallant youth never failing to come day after day with fresh provision, till at last the old jeweller was able to sit up. The gracious Providence preserved them all, in the meantime, from any attack of the Pestilence, though many persons died every day, on both sides of the

street, the distemper being at its worst pitch. Thus the houses became desolate, and the streets silent, and beginning to look green even, by the springing up of grass between the untrodden stones.

The prison-house of the Fair Maid of Ludgate and her father soon became, therefore, very irksome, and especially when the latter got well enough to stir about, and to behold through the window these symptoms of the public calamity, which filled him with more anxiety than he had ever felt, on account of his dear child, whose life was not secure, any more than his own, for a single hour. His alarm and disquiet on this account threatening to bring on a relapse of his malady, the tender girl found but little happiness in his recovery, which seemed thus to have been altogether in vain. And truly, it was a sufficient grief for any one to be in the centre, though unhurt, of such a horrible devastation; whereof none could guess at the continuance, whether it would cease

of its own accord, or rage on till there were no more victims to be destroyed.

The plague, however, abated towards the close of the year, when the King, who had removed with his court to Windsor in the midst of the alarm, felt disposed one day to pay a visit to the metropolis. Accordingly, mounting on horseback, he rode into town, accompanied by the Lord Rochester, and the same gentlemen who had been his attendants on the former occasion.

The monarch was naturally much shocked at the desolate aspect of the place, which, from a great and populous city, had become almost a desert; the sound of the horses' hoofs echoing dismally throughout the solitary streets, but bringing very few persons to look out at the windows, and of those, the chief part were more like lean ghastly ghosts than human living creatures. In consequence he rode along in a very melancholy mood of mind, which the pleasant Earl endeavoured to enliven by various witty jests

but without any effect, for they sounded hollow and untimely, even in his own ear.

At last arriving at the Hill of Ludgate, and the image of the Fair Maid coming to his remembrance, the King looked towards the house; and lo! there frowned the horrible red cross, which was still distinct upon the door. Immediately he pointed out this deadly signal to Rochester, who had already noticed it, and then both shook their heads, meaning to say that she was dead; however, to make certain, the Earl alighted, and knocked with all his might at the door. But there was no answer, nor any appearance of a face at any window. Thereupon, with very heavy hearts, they rode onwards for a few doors farther, where there was a young man, like a spectre, sitting at an open casement, with a large book like a bible in his hands. The King, who spied him first, asked of him very eagerly, whether the Fair Maid of Ludgate was alive or dead, but the

ghostly man could tell nothing of the matter, except that the Jeweller had been the very first person to be seized by the plague in their quarter. Thereupon the King made up his mind that the fair Alice had perished amongst the many thousand victims of the pest, and with a very sorrowful visage he rode on, through the city, where he spent some hours in noticing the deplorable consequences of that visitation.

Afterwards, he returned with his company by the same way, and when they came towards the jeweller's house, in Ludgate, there were several young men standing about the door. They had been knocking to obtain tidings of the Fair Maid, but without any better success than before; so that getting very impatient, they began, as the King came up, to cast stones through the windows. The Earl of Rochester, seeing them at this vain work, called out as he passed,

"Gentlemen, you are wasting your labour! The divinity of your city is dead; as you may know, by asking of the living skeleton at yonder casement."

At these words, the young men, supposing that the Earl had authority for what he said, desisted from their attempts, and the two companies went each their several ways; the King, with his attendants, to Windsor, and the sad youths to their homes, with grief on all their faces, and very aching hearts, through sorrow for the Fair Maid of Ludgate.

As for the gallant Ralph Seaton, he had ceased to come beneath the window for some time before, since there was no longer any one living within the house to drink from his pitcher, or to eat out of his basket. Notwithstanding, he continued now and then to bring a few pieces of game, and sometimes a flask also, to the father of Alice, who lived under the same roof, for the elder Seaton was a good

yeoman of Kent, and thither Ralph had conveyed the old citizen as soon as he was well enough to be removed. The old Jeweller outlived the Plague by a score of years; but the Fair Maid of Ludgate, who had survived the pestilence, was carried off shortly afterwards by marriage, the title which had belonged to her in the city being resolved into that of the Dame Alice Seaton.

THE THREE BROTHERS.

——— Now confess and know,
Wit without money sometimes gives the blow.

VALENTINE.

THE THREE BROTHERS.

Abendali of Bagdad had three sons; the two eldest, very tall and proper youths for their years; but the youngest, on account of the dwarfishness of his stature, was called Little Agib. He had, notwithstanding, a wit and shrewdness very unusual to any, especially of his childish age; whereas his brothers were dull and slow of intellect, to an extraordinary degree.

Now Abendali, though he had money, was not rich enough to leave behind him a competence for each of his sons; wherefore he thought it best to teach them in the first instance to scrape together as much as they could; accordingly, calling them all to him,

on some occasion, he presented to each a small canvass purse, with a sequin in it, by way of handsel, and then spoke to them to this effect:

"Behold! here is a money-bag a-piece, with a single sequin, for you must furnish the rest by your own industry. I shall require every now and then to look into your purses, in order to see what you have added; but to that end you shall not have any recourse to theft, or violent robbery, for money is often purchased by those methods at too dear a rate; whereas the more you can obtain by any subtle stratagems, or smart strokes of policy, the greater will be my opinion of your hopefulness and abilities."

The three brethren accepted of the purses with great good-will, and immediately began to think over various plans of getting money; so quickly does the desire of riches take root in the human bosom. The two elder ones, however, beat about their wits to no purpose, for they could not start a single invention, except of begging alms, which they would not

descend to; whereas the Little Agib added another piece of money to his sequin before the setting of the sun.

It happened that there lived at some distance from Abendali an old lady, who was bed-ridden, but very rich, and a relation of the former, though at some degrees removed. As she was thus lying in her chamber, she heard the door open, and Agib came in, but he was so little that he could not look upon the bed. The lady asking who it was, he answered, and said, "My name is Little Agib, and I am sent here by my father, your kinsman, who is called Abendali; for he desires to know how you are, and to wish you a thousand years."

The old lady wondered very much that Abendali was so much concerned for her, since they had not held any correspondence together for a long while; however, she was very well satisfied with his attention, and gave a small piece of money to Agib, desiring the slaves moreover to bring him as many sweetmeats as he liked. The

brethren showing their purses at night to their father, the two eldest had only their sequin a-piece, whereas little Agib had thus added already to his store.

On the following day, little Agib paid another visit to the sick lady, and was as well treated as before. He repeated the same compliments very many times afterwards, adding continually fresh monies in his purse; at last, Abendali, passing by chance in the same quarter of the city, took it into his head to inquire for his kinswoman; and when he entered her chamber, lo! there sat little Agib behind the door. As soon as he had delivered his compliments, which the lady received very graciously, she pointed to little Agib, and said she had taken it very kindly that the child had been sent so often to ask after her health.

"Madam," said Abendali, who laughed all the while; "the little liar has not told you one word of truth. I know well enough why he came here; which was on none of my errands."

The Little Agib prudently held his peace till his father was gone; whereupon the old lady asked him how he could be so wicked as to deceive her with such multiplied lies.

"Alas!" said Agib, pretending to whimper very much, "I hope God will not punish me with a sore tongue for such sinning. It is true, as my father says, that he never commanded me to come; but I was so scandalized at his shocking neglect, that I could not help calling upon you of my own accord, and making up those messages in his name."

The old lady hereupon was so much touched with the seeming piety and tenderness of Little Agib, that she bade him climb upon the bed and kiss her, which he performed; and because he had come so disinterestedly, and not, she believed, for the trifling pieces of money, she gave him a coin of more value, to make amends, as she said, for Abendali's injurious suspicion.

The same night, when he looked in Agib's purse, the old man saw that he had three pieces

more; at which he nodded, as if to say I know where these came from: whereupon Agib, being concerned for the honour of his ingenuity, spoke up to his father. "It is not," said he, "as you suppose; these two pieces I obtained elsewhere, than at the place you are thinking of;" and with that he appealed to his brethren.

"It is truth," said the eldest, "what he speaks. Observing that he had every night a fresh piece of money, whereas we that are his elders could get nothing at all, myself and my brother besought of Little Agib to acquaint us with his secret for making gold and silver; but he would not part with it, unless we gave him our two pieces, and thus we have no money whatever."

With that the elder brothers turned both at once on Little Agib, calling him a liar and a cheat; for that, when they called on the old lady, instead of giving them a piece of money or two, as he had reported, she said that she

knew what they came for, and withal bade them to be thrust forth from the chamber.

During this relation, Abendali could not help laughing secretly at the cunning of Little Agib, who had thus added his brother's money to his own; however, he quieted the two elder ones, by declaring that Agib had told them the truth.

About a month after this time, the Angel of Death called upon Abendali, and touching him on the right side, bade him prepare to die. Accordingly the old man sent for his sons to his bedside, and after embracing them tenderly one by one, spoke as follows:

"My dear children, you will find all the money that I have in the world in a great earthen pot, which stands in a hole of the wall, behind the head of my couch. As for its disposal my will is this, that it shall be equally divided between you two, who are the eldest. As for Little Agib, he has wit enough to provide for himself, and must shift as he can."

With these words he died, and the sons turned his face towards the East,—the two eldest setting themselves immediately to divide the money between them, in order to divert their grief; whereas Little Agib, having nothing to do, shed a great many tears. However, it happened so, that the soul of the infirm kinswoman of Abendali took flight to God the same evening, and she left by her will a sum of money, that made Agib equal in means with his brethren; whereupon, having something likewise to occupy his thoughts, his eyes were soon as dry as the others.

After a decent season, the three brothers, desiring a change of scene, and to see a little of the world, determined to travel: accordingly, bestowing their money about their persons, they set forth in company, intending to go towards Damascus; but, before they had gone very far, they were set upon by a band of thieves, who took away all they had. The two elder ones, at this mischance, were very

much cast down; but Little Agib, who was no worse off than he had been left by his father, kept up his heart. At last they came to a town, where Agib, who never had any mistrust of his wit, took care to hire a small house without any delay; but his brethren were very much dismayed at so rash an act, for they knew that there was not a coin amongst them all. Notwithstanding, Agib, by several dexterous turns, made shift to provide something every day to eat and drink, which he shared generously with the others, exacting from them only a promise that they would help him whenever they could.

At last even the inventions of Little Agib began to fail, and he was walking through the streets in a very melancholy manner, when he espied an old woman making over towards an artificer's with a brazen pan in her arms. A thought immediately came into his head: therefore, stopping the woman before she could step into the shop, and drawing her a

little way apart, he spoke thus. "I doubt not, my good mother, that you were going to the brazier, to have that vessel repaired, and I should be loth to stop the bread from coming to any honest man's mouth. Notwithstanding, I have not eaten for three days;" here the little hypocrite began to shed tears;—"and as I know something of the craft, if you will allow me to do such a small job for you, it will be a great charity."

The old woman, in reply, told him that she was indeed going to the brazier's on such an errand, but nevertheless, the vessel having a flaw at the bottom, she was very well disposed to let him repair her pan, as it would be an act of charity, and especially as he would no doubt mend it for half-price. The Little Agib agreed to her terms; whereupon leading her to the door of his house, he took the pan from her, and desired her to call again in a certain time.

The brethren wondered very much to

see Agib with such a vessel, when they had not provision to make it of any use; but he gave them no hint of his design, requiring only of them that they would go abroad, and raise money upon such parts of their raiment as they could spare. The two elder ones, having a great confidence in his cleverness, did as they were desired, but the greater part of their clothes having been pledged in the same way, they could borrow but two pieces for their turbans, which were left as security.

As soon as he got the money, Agib ran off to the brazier, who has been mentioned before, and ordered him to repair the brass pan in his best manner, and without any delay, which the man punctually fulfilled. Thereupon Agib made him a present of the two pieces, which amounted to much more than the usual charge for such a job, and made haste home with the pan, where he arrived but a breathing space before the old woman knocked at the door. She was very much pleased with the work, for

the pan had a brave new bottom, perfectly water-tight, and neatly set in; but the moderate charge that was demanded by Agib delighted her still more, wherefore she began to hobble off, with great satisfaction in her countenance, when he beckoned to her to come back.

"There is but one thing," said he, "that I request of you, which is this; that you will not mention this matter to any one, for otherwise, as I am not a native of the place, I shall have all the braziers of the town about my ears."

The old woman promised readily to observe his caution; notwithstanding, as he had foreseen, she told the story to every one of her neighbours, and the neighbours gossiped of it to others, so that the fame of the cheap brazier travelled through the whole of her quarter. Thereupon, every person who had a vessel of brass or copper, or a metal pan of any kind that was unsound, resolved to have it mended at so reasonable a rate; and each one intend-

ing to be beforehand with the others, it fell out, that a great mob came all at once to the door.

As soon as Agib heard the knocking, and the voices, and the jangling of the vessels, for the good people made a pretty concert without, in order to let him know what they wanted, he turned about to his brothers, and said that the time for their usefulness was arrived. Thereupon he opened the door, and saw a great concourse of people, who were all talking together, and holding up towards him the bottoms of kettles and pans. Whenever he could make himself heard through the clamour, he desired every one to make a private mark of their own upon the metal, which being done, he took in the articles one by one, and appointed with the owners to return for them on the morrow at the same hour.

The things which had been brought made a goodly heap in the chamber, being piled up in one corner to the very top of the room, a sight

that amused Agib and his brothers very much, for the latter made sure that they were to sell the whole of the metal, and then make off with the money, which was quite contrary to the policy of Agib, who remembered the injunctions of Abendali, as to the danger of such acts. However, there was no time to be wasted, having such a quantity of work before their eyes; accordingly, bidding his brothers perform after his example, Agib sat down on the floor with one of the brazen vessels between his legs, and by help of an old knife and some coarse sand, scraped and scoured the bottom till it looked very bright and clean. The two eldest laboured after the same manner with great patience, and persevered so stedfastly, that by daylight the bottoms of the vessels were all shining as brilliantly as the sun. "Now," said Agib, "we may lie down and rest awhile, for we have done the work of a score of hands."

At the time appointed, which was about noon, the people came in a crowd, as before, to

fetch away their pans, every one striving to be first at the door. In the mean time, Agib had the vessels heaped up behind him, so as to be conveniently within reach; whereupon, opening the door, and holding up one of the articles in his right hand, one of the crowd called out, "That is my pan!" Immediately Agib reached forth the vessel to the owner, and without a word stretched out his left hand for the money, which in every case was a piece of the same amount that had been paid by the old woman; and his two brothers, who stood behind with blacked faces, to look like furnacemen, put all the coins into a bag. In this way, Agib, as fast as he could, delivered all the things to the people; who, as soon as they saw the bright bottoms of their pots and kettles, were well satisfied, and withal very much amazed to think that so much work had been performed in such a little space.

"It is wonderful! it is wonderful!" they said to each other; "he must have a hundred work-

people in his house !" and with that and similar sayings they departed to their homes.

When the last of the pot-bearers was gone out of sight, Agib told his brothers that it was time for them to leave the place; whereupon the dull-witted pair began to think of redeeming their turbans, and, in spite of the entreaties of Agib, being very obstinate, as such thick-skulls usually are, they went forth on that errand. In the interval, Agib, who had many misgivings at heart, was obliged to remain in the house; so that the event fell out as unhappily as might have been foretold. In a little while, some of the people, who had paid for the mending of their pans, found out the trick, and these telling the others that were in the same plight, they repaired suddenly to the house, before Agib had time to escape, and carried him into the presence of the Cadi.

The furious people told their story all at once, as they could, to the judge; and withal they held up so many shining pan-bottoms, of

brass as well as copper, that he was quite dazzled, and almost as blind as Justice ought to be, according to the painters. Many of them, besides, to eke out their speech, laid sundry violent thumps upon the twanging vessels, so that such an uproar had never been heard before in the court. As for Agib, though he felt his case to be somewhat critical, he could not help laughing at the oddness of the scene; and there were others in the hall, who laughed more violently than he.

It was a common thing with the Caliph of Bagdad to go in disguise through his dominions, as well to overlook the administration of justice in different places, as for his own private diversion. Thus it happened at this moment, that the Caliph was standing, unrecognized, amongst the spectators of the scene. He laughed very heartily at the eagerness of the complainants and their whimsical concert. At last, sending his royal signet to the Cadi, with a message that it was his pleasure to try

the cause himself, he went up into the judge's seat.

As soon as the accusers perceived the Caliph, they set up a new clamour, and a fresh clatter of their pans, so that he had much ado to preserve his gravity and his eyesight. However, when he had heard enough to comprehend the matter, he commanded them to hold their peace, and then called upon Agib to say what he could in his defence.

"Commander of the Faithful!" said Agib, "I beseech but your gracious patience, and I will answer all this rabble, and their kettles to boot. Your majesty must know then, that yesterday morning these people all made even such a tumult about my door as you have just heard. As soon as ever I came forth, they held up the bottoms of their vessels one and all towards me, as they have just done to your majesty; and if the Commander of the Faithful understands by that action that he is to

mend all the bottoms of their pans, I confess that I am worthy of the bastinado."

The Caliph laughed more heartily than ever at this idea of Agib's, in which he was joined by all the unconcerned parties in the court; whereas the pan-bearers looked very much disconcerted. At last, one of them, speaking in behalf of the rest, besought of the Caliph that the old woman might be sent for, whose pot had been mended by Agib, and accordingly an officer was dispatched to bring her to the court. As soon as she came, the Cadi interrogated her, by the command of the Caliph, as to her transaction with Agib; whereupon she related the whole affair, and proved that he had undertaken, by express words, to put a new bottom to her pan.

The Caliph was very much vexed at this turn of the case against Agib, whereas the complainants were altogether in exultation, and asked eagerly and at once of the old woman,

whether her pan was not merely scrubbed bright at the bottom, and unserviceable, like theirs. The old woman, however, declared that it was no such matter, but that her pan was quite water-tight, and repaired with a new bottom in a workmanlike manner; whereupon the vessel being examined, it was discovered that she had told the truth.

The Caliph, who was overjoyed at this favourable result, now laughed again till he was ready to fall out of his seat. Whereas, the pan-bearers fell into a fresh fit of rage, shaking their clanking utensils first at the old woman, and then at Agib, and at last at each other, every one shifting the blame of the failure from himself to his neighbour, who had prevented the cause from being properly heard. In the mean time, all the braziers and metal-workers of the place, who had heard of the subject of the examination, thronged into the court; and began to treat with the enraged people who had been juggled for the repairs of

their pans: and these men falling into dispute with each other, there arose a fresh uproar. The Cadi, therefore, would fain have had them all thrust out of the place, but the Caliph desired that the rioters might have their way for a little longer, not doubting that some fresh mirth would arise out of the squabble. Accordingly, before long, the complainants came forward with a fresh accusation against the artificers, that under pretence of examining the vessels, they had thrust fresh holes in them, and withal they flourished the damaged pan-bottoms once more in the eyes of the Commander of the Faithful.

Little Agib, in the mean time, enjoyed this uproar in his sleeve, and casting a sly glance or two towards the seat of justice, he soon perceived that it was not more displeasing to the Caliph. The latter, after laughing a while longer, put on a grave look by force, and commanded Agib to relate what passed with the people, at the delivery of their wares.

"Sire," replied Agib, "as soon as I had got all the pans together, which were thus forced as it were upon me, I examined them as narrowly as I could; but not being a brazier, nor knowing any thing whatever of that trade, I could perceive only that they wanted a little scouring, which I performed by the help of my two brothers. This morning the people came again for their pots and pans, and seeing that they had only held up the bottoms towards me, in like manner I only held up the bottoms towards them; wherewith they were so well contented, that each gave me a small piece of money, without any demand on my part, and they went on their way."

As soon as Agib had concluded these words, he was silent; whereupon one of the braziers pushed his way through the crowd, and making his reverence before the Caliph, spoke as follows:—

"Commander of the Faithful, what this young man has said is every word of it true. As for

any sort of copper or brass work, he is quite ignorant of the craft, for the very morning before this, he brought to me a pan of his own to be repaired. By his desire, therefore, I put in a bran new bottom, for which he paid me very honestly as well as handsomely, so that I wish I had many more such liberal customers. As for these foolish people that make such a clatter, they are not worthy to be believed for an instant; for I leave it to your Majesty to consider whether so many bottoms as they speak of could be put into their vessels by all the braziers in the place, in the course of a single night. The thing is impossible; and besides, if it could be done, there is no man alive that could do such a job conscientiously, under ten times the price which they confess to have paid to him. I am a judge and ought to know."

The Caliph was very much diverted with this speech of the brazier, which made all the disconcerted pan-bearers hang down their heads. He then turned round to the Cadi and

asked what he thought of the case; the latter having given his answer, the crier was commanded to procure silence in the court, and the Caliph stood up to give judgment.

"Your observation," said he, turning towards the Cadi, "is both learned and just. I am of opinion, likewise, that the holding up of the bottoms of brazen pans, is not amongst any of the known forms of agreement. Thus there was no legal bargain on either side,"—and at these words the disappointed people, raising up their hands towards the Prophet in appeal against the injustice of the Caliph, there arose a new flashing of brass and copper bottoms, and a fresh clatter of all the pans.

"Notwithstanding," continued the Caliph, "as there seems to have been some evasion of a secret understanding between the two parties, my decree therefore is this, that the criminal shall receive two hundred strokes upon the soles of his feet;" and herewith, the hands fall-

ing down again with satisfaction, there ensued a fresh clanking chorus throughout the hall.

"However," the Caliph went on thus, as soon as there was silence—"it is necessary that justice on both sides should be equal and complete; wherefore, as the complainants did but hold up their pans, and then reckon that the order for the new bottoms was distinct, so it shall be sufficient for the executioner to lift up his arm two hundred times, and the criminal shall be deemed to have suffered as many stripes of the bastinado."

At this pleasant decision, there was a great shout of applause in the court; but the discomfited pan-bearers departed in great dudgeon, with more clangour than ever; and almost in a temper to hang up their pans, like the kettles of the Turkish Janizaries, as the signals for a revolt.

As for Agib, he suffered the penalty, according to his sentence; but the Caliph was so much

delighted with his wit and address, that before long he raised him to be one of his Ministers of State. The two elder ones, on the contrary, being very dull and slow, howbeit very proper men, rose no higher than to be soldiers of the Body Guard. Thus the expectation of Abendali was fulfilled, the Little Agib, though last in birth and least in stature, becoming the foremost in fortune and the highest in dignity of the Three Brothers.

THE END.

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